

CALL FOR ENTRIES TO INDIA'S BIGGEST WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS: BP WPOY 2014-2015

INDIA'S #1  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
MAGAZINE

www.betterphotography.in

December 2014 • Rs. 150  
(Total 164 pages+16 pages Supplement)

WITH  
THIS ISSUE  
16-PAGE SUPPLEMENT  
on the 4D Focus Revolution by Sony

# Better Photography

Better Technique. Better Inspiration.



Get amazing macros  
of snowflakes with a  
compact camera!

MOODS, TONES & SUBJECTS IN  
**WINTER**

Colours to composition, landscapes to  
portraits... get stunning photos this season

## EXCLUSIVE TESTS

Sony Alpha A5100

Zeiss Otus 55mm f/1.4

WD My Passport Wireless 2TB

## GREAT MASTERS

Deciphering the vast visual  
canvas of Swapan Parekh

## CELLPHONE TECHNIQUE

Quick and easy tips to get your  
work noticed using Instagram

## VISUAL MUSINGS

Ami Vitale on the significance  
of being a storyteller first

## PROFILE

Fausto Giaccone interprets  
Marquez's enigmatic world

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## GET PUBLISHED IN BETTER PHOTOGRAPHY

Participate in online contests, share your best tips and techniques to get your work noticed. Follow these simple guidelines:

### For Your Pictures, Reader's Gallery and Reader's Tip:

- Visit <http://betterphotography.in/contests> and register yourself on the website
- Participate in the relevant contests on the page. There will always be a contest open for you to take part in!
- For Reader's Gallery contests, make sure the images have been made using a cellphone
- For Reader's Tip and Your Pictures contests, include a 100-word note on how and why you shot the image
- Winners of all the contests get featured on our website and can be featured in the magazine too. They will also receive special prizes!

### Send in a synopsis, with low-resolution images for viewing, to contribute articles to the following sections:

On Assignment, Step-by-Step, Photofeature, Tips & Tricks, Shooting Technique, History, Story Behind the Picture

### Get in Touch with us:

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- To showcase your best photographs: [entries@betterphotography.in](mailto:entries@betterphotography.in)
- To contribute articles and for questions on photography: [editor@betterphotography.in](mailto:editor@betterphotography.in)
- For your suggestions, appreciation and criticism on the magazine: [feedback@betterphotography.in](mailto:feedback@betterphotography.in)

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# Better Photography

Our ever curious and passionate love affair with the camera will never cease. And so be it as Better Photography, India's first magazine completely devoted to the art and science of photography presents an expansive imagery like no other can. It is also the best-selling photography magazine in India and South Asia.

[www.betterphotography.in](http://www.betterphotography.in)

# December 2014



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PHOTOGRAPH: MUHAMMAD ALAMSYAH RAUF,  
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Visit [www.hipa.ae](http://www.hipa.ae) to participate in the next edition.  
DESIGN: SANTOSH D KAMBLE

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**INDIA'S BIGGEST WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS RETURN!**  
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# Feedback

Send your suggestions, thoughts, and feedback letters to...  
[feedback@betterphotography.in](mailto:feedback@betterphotography.in)  
 Every month, the 'Letter of the Month' will win a special gift from



**"I am glad that I am able to fuel my passion for photography even with a 2MP phone camera."**

## Wedding Disasters

Reading the November 2014 cover story 'A Twist in the Tale' brought back memories of my first wedding assignment. At the absolute last minute, the bride's parents decided that they wanted me to make the traditional group stage shots instead of the candids I had been hired for. This was

because the photographer who was responsible for it had taken ill.

I was under prepared and didn't have the necessary lights. There were also tacky blue LED lights that were wrecking havoc to my test shots. Thankfully, I happened to be carrying an external flashgun and was able to bribe the lighting guy to switch off the LEDs. While I laugh about it now, it got pretty scary there for a while.

**Umendar Varma, Allahabad, via post**

## Shooting With a 2MP Camera

I use a 2MP phone and edit with PicsArt. Personally, I love photographing objects, installations and other forms of still life subjects. It would be helpful if BP could do a feature on creative ways to shoot these subjects with a cameraphone.

**Hadwt Baglari, via Facebook**

## What Do You Photograph Over the Weekend?

During the Diwali holidays, we challenged our readers to send us their best photographs for the *Festive Fireworks* contest. From patterns in the sky, to the expressions of awe on the faces of people watching the celebrations, the entries were numerous. Here are our favourites.

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**I laid down on the ground at the Ram Leela Maidan in New Delhi, to get a new perspective of the celebrations.**

Gajendra Choudhary



**After shooting a few images of just the fireworks, I decided to include the amused bystanders in my photographs.**

Santanu Paul



**The camera was placed on a tripod with an exposure time of 8sec. This enabled me to use a narrow aperture of f/8 and maximise the depth of field.**

Debasish Acharyya



**I was lucky to have this traditional boat, called a Dhow, pass by at an opportune moment. Thus, adding to an otherwise empty foreground.**

Sanjiban Ghosh



## From the Eyes of a Six Year Old

I like looking at the photographs in your magazine, which my father brings home every month. I think the best pictures are the ones with animals and nature in them. I love taking photographs of birds, flowers and shooting beautiful sceneries too.

My parents showed me a photo album of my baby pictures that my *papa* had photographed. That is when I started becoming interested

in photography and making pictures with his cellphone. The photo album let me see things from a time that I cannot remember.

I also love taking photos of my mummy when she dresses up for parties and during festivals. She looks very pretty. Thank you for reading my letter.

**Shriya S Kamble, Mumbai, via email**



Shriya S Kamble

## Letter of the Month

We believe that the joy of a family photo is in displaying it. To make your special memories stand out, this **Letter of the Month** wins a special Photo Frame



➔ Along with her letter Shriya sent us a sketch of a camera, giving us a look at what she associates with photography—love, colours, smiles and nature.

## An Honest Rant About Gear

Magazines like *Better Photography* focus their stories on the principle of 'shoot with the gear that you have and not what you want'. While this is admirable, the reality is that as a professional you often end up needing the latest flashy gadgets.

The unfortunate part is that you don't need them for the actual execution of the assignment but to impress clients. It is rather sad that often getting an assignment comes down to having the newest 36MP camera or whether you edit on an Apple iMac. I often feel like the industry is becoming less about the art and the technique, and more about being able to

say, "the photographer I hired uses such and such camera."

**Nigam Hegde, New Delhi, via email**

## When Buying Gear Online

Besides the e-commerce giants Amazon, Flipkart and Snapdeal, there are numerous other websites out there that offer deals that appear too good to be true. When you Google them, however, there are always conflicting reports of people being swindled by them and people praising them. It would be a great boon for amateur photographers, like me, if *BP* would do a scoop on which of these sites are trustworthy.

**Deepthi Sharma, New Delhi, via email**

### CORRIGENDUM

The following image by Amit Panchasara was inadvertently miscredited in the November 2014 issue of *BP*. We apologise for the previous error.



Amit Panchasara

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# SnapShots

## WHAT'S NEW

### Olympus Stylus 1s

Olympus has announced the Stylus 1s, but only in Japan. It has a 12MP CMOS sensor, a 28–300mm f/2.8 lens, 7fps continuous shooting mode and an ISO of 100–12,800. It also features a step-zoom function, a smaller AF target, focus peaking and interval shooting functionality. The pricing is yet to be announced.



### Pentax K-S1 Sweets Collection



Following the release of the K-S1 camera a few months ago, Pentax has announced new versions of the 20.12MP camera, under the Sweets Collection. The cameras are called Strawberry Cake, Blue Cream Soda and Lime Pie, all of which have white coloured bodies with colour accents corresponding to their names. They come with a standard SMC DA L 18–55mm f/3.5–5.6 lens and is priced at USD 699 (approx. Rs. 42,900).

### Google Nexus 6

The 6-inch phone is the company's largest phone yet. It features a 13MP rear camera and a 2MP front-facing camera. Google also announced the latest update to the Android OS software, the Android 5.0 Lollipop. The Nexus 6 is priced at USD 649 (approx. Rs. 40,000).

### Samsung Galaxy A5 and A3

Samsung Galaxy A5 (6.7mm) and A3 (6.9mm) sport a 5MP front-facing camera and a Quad-core 1.2 GHz processor. Other features of the Galaxy A5 include a 13MP camera, 2GB RAM and a 5-inch HD Super AMOLED display, while the Galaxy A3 features an 8MP camera, 1GB RAM and a 4.5-inch qHD Super AMOLED display. Also, both the phones have 16GB internal memory with a micro SD card slot of up to 64GB.



## Magnum Photographer René Burri Passes Away

René Burri, the legendary photographer behind some of the most iconic images of Che Guevara and Pablo Picasso is no more. The Swiss-based Magnum photographer passed away on Monday at the age of 81 in Zürich, Switzerland.

Burri became an associate of Magnum in 1955, and received worldwide acclaim for his work around deaf and mute children in *Touch of Music for the Deaf*. He also covered major political events in various countries, and made images that have left their mark in the photography consciousness of the entire world.

His name became synonymous with the iconic portrait of Che Guevara with a cigar in his mouth, made in Havana in 1961. In 1998, he won the Dr Erich



Ernst Mandelmann

Salomon Prize from the German Association of Photography. His last book was *Impossible Reminiscences* (2013),

which was a culmination of his colour images and the stories behind them.

In a statement released by Magnum Photos, President Martin Parr said, "Not only was he one of the great post-war photographers, he was also one of the most generous people I have had the privilege to meet. His contribution to Magnum and his unrivalled ability to tell stories and entertain us over this time will be part of his enormous legacy... Our thoughts and best wishes go out to his family."



René Burri

“

You can't see fear or lust; you can't photograph someone's anxieties, how disappointment feels. Photographs are approximations.

”

DUANE MICHALS (1932)

Duane Michals is based in America and is known for his use of multiple exposures, series and texts in photography. His narratives are innovative and storytelling methods go beyond a linear format. His sequences are akin to those of a cinema reel, with series being depicted frame by frame. He works with staged scenes exploring gender, sexuality, philosophy and literature. His work has been displayed at The Museum of Modern Art, in New York, the Odakyu Museum in Tokyo and at the International Center of Photography in New York.



Image source: www.lucies.org



## WHAT'S NEW

### Sony SD Card UX Series 128GB

The 128GB card comes with a read speed of up to 94MB/s and a write speed of up to 60MB/s. It also features an Ultra-High Speed (UHS Speed Class 3) rating. The card is ideal for 4K video recording and XAVC S codec mode recording. It is also waterproof, temperature proof, x-ray proof and dust proof. It also features the Sony File Rescue software, which supports 3D movies and photos.



### JOBY Suction Cup with Locking Arm and GorillaPod Arm

JOBY's latest additions to their action mount lineup are made up of built-in suction cups that allow for easy mounting on any smooth surfaces like glass and metal. The two suction cups differ because of the arms. The Gorillapod arm is made up of the ball and joint tripod that the company specialises in. The Locking Arm, on the other hand, uses two ball and joint mechanisms on the ends of a straight arm.

### Manfrotto Filters

Manfrotto has introduced a new line of lens filters that are available in UV, Circular Polariser and Protective variants. These are available in three categories—Essential, Advanced and Professional. The Essential and Advanced UV filters come in two categories, with 8 and 12 layers of coating respectively. The Essential and Advanced Circular Polarising filters offer 68% light transmission and Advanced provides more layers of coating. The Professional Circular Polarising filter has 90% light transmission and 12 layers of coating. The Protective lineup is available only in the Professional category and comes with dust, moisture and scratch protection.

### Flickr for iPad



The photo sharing website is now available for iPad as an app, and is optimised for iOS 8 and iPad Air 2. On the iPad, Flickr can display images in high resolution by pushing up to 30,00,000 pixels per photo. iPad photographers can also use the in-app camera to capture images and video on the go. Apart from this, users will benefit from Flickr's live filters and advanced editing tools too.

### VSCO Cam 4.0 for iOS and iPad

The power-packed updated version of VSCO Cam lets you compare filtered images side-by-side. Other significant features include advanced camera controls like manual focus, shutter speed, white balance and exposure compensation. It also has a syncing ability which lets you view and edit selected photographs across iOS and Android devices. The update also includes a web uploader tool which allows photographers to import DSLR images for editing.

## Delhi Photo Festival Announces its Theme for 2015

Set to begin in October 2015, the Biennial Delhi Photo Festival (DPF) has announced its theme—*Aspire*. Photographers from all over the world are invited to be a part of the event. Their official website described the

word *aspire* as simple and noble, yet complicated.

The submissions for the festival will begin in March 2015. For information on how to participate and other details, visit [www.delhiphotofestival.com](http://www.delhiphotofestival.com)



The theme for DPF 2013 was *Grace*. The festival also hosted several artist talks, workshops as well as exhibitions.



## Canon's New 100–400mm Arrives After 16 Years!

The original Canon EF 100–400mm f/4.5–5.6L lens finally has a new successor—the Canon EF 100–400mm f/4.5–5.6L IS II USM.



The first generation of the lens was released in 1998. The latest iteration features a new optical formula which includes one Fluorite and one Super UD lens element. The lens is slightly bigger than its predecessor and comes with a rotating zoom design.

The lens has three Image Stabilisation modes and has four stops more than the older version. It also comes equipped

with a zoom lock and its minimum focusing distance has been brought to an improved 3.2 feet.

The EF 100–400mm f/4.5–5.6L IS II USM lens has Canon's newly

developed Air Sphere Coating (ASC), to tackle ghosting and flaring. It comes in a dust and water resistant body along with an ET-83D lens hood. This allows users to change filters while the hood is still attached.

The lens will be available for USD 2199 (approx. Rs. 1,35,730). The Indian launch date and pricing are yet to be announced.

## Sensorium: Visuals, Music & Literature Intersect

Coming to Goa on 5 December, *Sensorium* offers a view into the world of photography and its tryst with music, poems, books and cinema.



Spearheaded by Prashant Panjiar and Siddharth Dhavant Shanghi, this event will see Fausto Giaccone's work titled *Macondo*, based on the work of Gabriel García Márquez. Also featured at the festival will be Dayanita Singh, Sooni Taraporevala, Sohrab Hura, Farrokh Chothia, Anusha Yadav and many others.

This month, *Better Photography* interviewed photographer Fausto Giaccone. Turn to page 100 to read his Profile. That is not all, we also have a special feature on *Sensorium* that you can find on page 106.

Sohrab Hura

7–28 November

**Photography Exhibition**

Japan Foundation, New Delhi  
Photographer Kazuyoshi Miyoshi is exhibiting his images that revolve around the designs and architectural styles of Japan. The collection of photographs is titled World Heritage Sites and the was commissioned by The Japan Foundation.

20 November–31 December

**Photo Poetry: Nicanor Parra**

Instituto Cervantes, New Delhi  
Natasha Hemrajani and Ronny Sen have dived into the poetic world of Nicanor Parra. Through their images they are trying to discover the poems or the anti-poems written by the Chilean poet such as *Test*, *Litany of the Little Bourgeois*, *The Vices of the Modern World* and *What is Poetry*.

**Photo Workshop X: Varanasi**

Varanasi



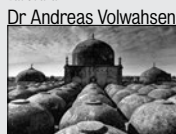
Chandan Gomes

Photographers Chandan Gomes and Vicky Roy will be conducting a four-day workshop in Varanasi. The workshop will take participants through the small lanes of the city, and will include collaborations, discussions, impromptu exhibitions and more. The fee is Rs. 6000. To register call +91-9899751031 or +91-9868966763.

24 November–11 December

**Living Architecture**

Maharaja Fatehsingh Museum, Vadodra  
Dr Andreas Volwahren



Dr Andreas Volwahren

has photographed ancient Indian architecture. The images add another dimension to his academic work which is a deep understanding of India's ancient structures.

**PRO TALK**

Noise is graininess or mottling that is visible in images that are taken at higher ISOs.

# HIPA Call for Entries: Life in Colour Competition



Jianhua Lin

The categories for the 2014–2015 Hamdan Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum International Photography Awards (HIPA) are *Life in Colour*, *General Entry*, *Faces* (black and white images) and *Night Photography*.

The grand prize winner stands to win USD 120,000 (approx. Rs. 73,00,000). The winner of the *Life in Colour* category will receive USD 25,000 (approx. Rs. 15,43,000) and the other category winners will receive USD 15,000 (approx. Rs. 9,27,000) each. The deadline of the contest is set to 31 December.

Previously, the 2013–2014 contest winners were announced in a larger-than-life awards ceremony earlier this year. *Better Photography* also carried a feature on the HIPA award recipients in the story *11 Award Winners Share Their Secrets on Humanistic Photography*. It appeared in the May 2014 issue.



Muhammed Alamsyah Rauf

**CALL FOR ENTRIES**

**The Signed Prints contest is open to professionals, amateurs and hobbyists alike.**

**Signed Prints Photography Contest**

**The Competition:** Enthusiasts, students and professional photographers alike can participate in this competition.

**Theme:** Colourful Abstract

**Prizes:** The first, second and third prize winner will receive Rs. 5000, Rs. 3000, Rs. 2000 respectively.

**Website:** [www.contest.threedots.in](http://www.contest.threedots.in)

**Deadline:** 15 December

**Second All India Photography Contest**

**The Competition:** The Kaleidoscope Photography Club in Bathinda are inviting entries from all over India.

**Theme:** Photo Essay

**Prizes:** The first prize winner will receive a 2-year

subscription of *National Geographic* and *National Geographic Traveler India* magazines.

**Entry Fee:** Rs. 200 per photo essay.

**Website:** [www.facebook.com/PCBTI](http://www.facebook.com/PCBTI)

**Deadline:** 15 December

**2015 Sony World Photography Awards**

**The Competition:** Photographers from all over the world are invited to participate in the annual contest.

**Categories:** Open Competition, Youth Award and Professional Competition

**Prizes:** The grand prize winner will receive a cash prize of USD 25,000 (approx. Rs. 15,35,770) and a Sony camera, amongst other prizes.

**Website:** [www.worldphoto.org](http://www.worldphoto.org)

**Deadline:** The deadline for different categories range from 5–8 January 2015.

**The Orange Flash Awards**

**The Competition:** Photo Orange and F-Stop are holding the awards to give back to the Indian wedding photography community. The competition will be judged by renowned wedding photographer Prakash Tilokani.

**Categories:** Pre-wedding, Candid Moments, Wedding Story

**Prizes:** The winners of the Pre-wedding and Candid moments category will receive photography equipment vouchers worth Rs. 25,000. The grand prize winner of the Wedding Story category will receive a camera kit or body worth Rs. 1,25,000, and a chance to represent India in the World Photographic Cup.

**Website:** [www.orangeflash.in](http://www.orangeflash.in)

**Deadline:** 30 April 2015



1 December

**Photography Exhibition**

Chitrakala Parishad, Bengaluru

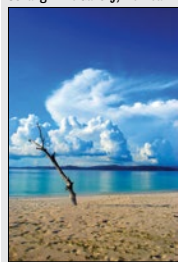
The Federation of Indian Photography and Karnataka Tourism held the All India Photography contest in November.

Out of the 1051 entries, the winning images along with other shortlisted entries will be exhibited.

8 December

**Photography Exhibition**

Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai



Pallavi Gupta

Photographer Pallavi Gupta will be exhibiting her images depicting the scenic beauty of the Andaman Islands.

10 December,

25–27 January 2015

**Shaping a Vision**

Chobi Mela, Bangladesh



Swapan Parekh will conduct a 3-day workshop at Chobi Mela, where he will look at the participants' individual works and help them open up their vision and thoughts. The fee of the workshop is USD 120 (approx. Rs. 7400). To register visit, [www.chobimela.org/apply-swapan-parekh](http://www.chobimela.org/apply-swapan-parekh)

15–30 December

**Institutions**

Story LTD, Mumbai

The exhibition by Christopher Taylor explores the interiors of some of the classic architectural emblems of British rule in Mumbai and Kolkata. It delves into colonialism and its impact on society today.

**PRO TALK**

**Ambient Light is the natural light that is present at a scene.**

**Tamron Produces its 5 Millionth Zoom Lens**

Tamron released the first AF 28–200mm f/3.8–5.6 Aspherical lens in 1992. As of 2014, the company has announced the production of its 5 millionth zoom lens. The company has developed a number of zoom lenses over the years with several innovations.



Along with this milestone, Tamron has announced the launch of the 28–300mm f/3.5–6.3 Di PZD lens for Sony mounts. The lens is moisture-resistant and features their trademark PZD technology which allows for quieter autofocussing. It will be available for Rs. 67,520.

**First Hasselblad in Space Sold for Over Rs. 1 Crore**

The first Hasselblad camera to travel in space, the 500c with a 80mm Zeiss lens, was auctioned for USD 2,75,000 (approx. Rs. 1,69,00,000), at a sale organised by R R Auction in Boston, USA.

The camera travelled with astronaut Walter Schirra on NASA's Mercury-Atlas 8 mission on October 3, 1962. The astronaut had purchased the camera after consulting photographers from *LIFE* and *National Geographic* magazines.

Image Source: [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)**THE MONTH THAT WAS****Incredible Nature**

Avanindra and his 78-year-old father Arvind displayed their photographs in an exhibition held at the Prabhodhankar Thackeray Hall in Mumbai. The exhibit was organised from 7–8 November and showcased images of flora, fauna and the landscapes all the way from Rajasthan to Kerala.

**Project 365**  
photographer Bhagyashri Patki speaks to the audience at the event.

**Mukhamukham—Project 365**

On 12 November, the Government Fine Arts College in Thrissur hosted the Mukhamukham—Meet the Photographers of the Project 365 event. Photographers Iqbal M K, Biju Ibrahim, Shiv Kiran,



Arnav Rastogi

Arnav Rastogi and Bhagyashri Patki presented their early works and the images from their ongoing work from Project 365. Professor Lekha, Principal of the Government Fine Arts College inaugurated the event.

**Building Museum Bhavan**

On 21 November, at the Jnanapravaha center in Mumbai, Dayanita Singh discussed how her work *Museum Bhavan* came together. With this project, she explored using the physical book in the form of an exhibition. This is an idea that she began looking into since 2007, with her work *Sent a Letter*.

**Canon Wedding Photography and Videography Workshop**

Experts from Canon India took wedding photographers and participants of the one-day workshop through the finer points of capturing emotions through photography and videography in weddings. The event that took place on 17 November, provided a hands-on live wedding setup and demonstration with professional equipment from Canon.

**Home Street Home**

Vicky Roy's extremely poignant images from life on the streets were displayed at the Alliance Francaise in Gurgaon, on 22 November. Curated by Chandan Gomes, the photographs speak of a life of survival, raw honesty, portraits of fellow travellers and street residents.

# INDUSTRY VOICE

**“TechNova offers products that cater to all the segments of digital print media.”**



**Vimal Parmar**  
DGM, Marketing—Digital Print Media, TechNova Imaging Systems (P) Ltd

TechNova has always been a pioneer in offering cutting-edge and best in class imaging solutions. Our range of digital print media offers many products for the imaging industry. These cater to almost all the segments, including design, drawing and textile printing, medical imaging, desktop and large format photography, archival printing and general commercial printing. Only TechNova offers products for all major print technologies, ensuring that we can provide solutions to customers, based on their requirements, and not just what we have.

Our products have been developed in close association with customers and hardware manufacturers. In addition to our own R&D and manufacturing base to offer tailor-made products, we have partnered with some of the best brands internationally, to offer solutions to even the most discerning customers.

We feel that in India, print is going to play a significant role for many more years to come, be it in the photography segment or general commercial printing segment. The earlier divide between photo and commercial printing is no more a very clear one.

In the coming years, we feel that there will be an increase in customers who are willing to pay a premium for superior products. Investments will continue to happen in the electro photography and inkjet space along with post finishing equipment, which in turn will drive demand for a variety of printing substrates.

—As told to Natasha Desai

# Sony Announces a Super Fast Smartphone Sensor

The recently announced Sony Exmor RS IMX230, packs a whopping 192 AF points to a 21MP 1/2.4-inch stacked cellphone sensor. The sheer number of autofocus points, in addition to the fact the sensor will allow for phase detection means that blazing fast AF is all but a guarantee for phones using these sensors.

As far as number of AF points go, this is the maximum that we have seen in a camera sensor today. The Sony A6000 and A5100 come close with 179 AF points.

Despite being able to shoot 21MP files, the sensor is supposed to be capable of shooting

full resolution images at an impressive 24fps. With the new sensor, realtime HDR will now be supported while shooting still images too. Older versions allowed realtime HDR only while shooting video.

This support has also been extended to 4k (4096 x 2160) for improved quality especially in backlit conditions. The sensor can capture 1080p60 video and HD at 120fps.

Given the relatively large size of the sensor for a cellphone, improvements to the Xperia's low light capabilities is to be expected as well (current Xperia phones use a 1/3.2-inch sensor).

While the IMX320 will begin shipping by April 2015, Sony has planned to release a 16MP variant as well. Whether the Sony Xperia Z4, rumoured to be announced on 5 January 2015, will utilise the same sensor remains to be seen.

For now you can read our review of the Sony Xperia Z3 on page 56.



**Sony packs 192 AF points, realtime HDR for photographs and improved 4k support in a 1/2.4-inch sensor.**

# Dr Alok Bhadrwaj to Move to Canon Singapore

Canon India's Executive Vice President, Dr Alok Bharadwaj will be moving to Canon's Singapore division to head the company's Corporate Strategy Group as the Senior Vice President.

Canon Singapore is the headquarters of Canon's Southeast and South Asia business operations. Dr Bharadwaj will be

responsible for corporate communications as well as strategic business planning for the region's operations. He will also be overseeing the business development in emerging Asian markets in this region. In his new role, he will be reporting to Kensaku Konishi, the President and CEO of Canon's Southeast and South Asia operations.

# BOOK REVIEW

**Title:** Vietnam, Mosaic of Contrasts  
**Authors:** Réhahn  
**ISBN:** 978-604-936-436-5  
**Publisher:** Nhà xuất bản Thời Đại  
**Price:** 11,50,000 VND (approx. Rs. 3300)

# A Window into Vietnam

*Vietnam, A Mosaic of Contrasts* is the culmination of French photographer Réhahn's trips across the Vietnamese countryside, where he visited more than 40 villages over the span of eight years. While the book is not completely diverse in its representation of Vietnam, it certainly does paint a serene picture of the rural landscape.

The hardcover book is divided into four sections—Childhood, Elderly, Life Style and Landscapes. The first two consist of portraits while the two latter sections showcase scenes from the lives of Vietnamese villagers.

The portraits in the sections Elderly and Childhood are a mixed bag of colour and black and white photographs. Some of them are tender, sweet and sensitively photographed, while others left me feeling a little unsatisfied. On the brighter side, the Landscapes and Life Style section of the book speak of a joyous Vietnam. Villagers go about their daily lives and Réhahn has managed to photograph some truly stunning sights.

As I reached the end of the photobook, I found that it could have been divided into two books consisting of portraits in one and the landscapes in the other. I enjoyed the landscapes and idyllic street scenes far more than I did the portraits, but overall the book made me want to pack my bags, head to Vietnam and just lose myself in the countryside there.



— Written by Natasha Desai



## Focus Photography Festival—Call for Submissions

The Focus Photography Festival is set to come to Mumbai in March 2015. For the same, the festival is inviting submissions from photographers and artists from all across the world to participate and interpret their theme *Crossover*; conceptualised by Pa Madhavan.

Participants are urged to explore and depict the theme where a cultural crossover has given way to a sameness across the world. Homogeneity and globalisation are the key aspects of this topic.

The deadline for submissions is 15 December and selected artists will be

announced on 20 January. The festival will kick off on 12 March and will carry on till 26 March 2015. To submit your images, visit [www.focusphotographyfestival.com](http://www.focusphotographyfestival.com)

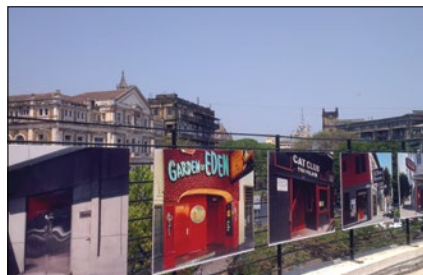


## Highlights From Adobe's Creativity Conference

Adobe Max 2014 saw the unveiling of the latest updates to Creative Cloud. Salient trends seen at the event were the companies continued expansion into the mobile market with apps like Premiere Clip for editing videos. Existing mobile apps like Photoshop Mix, Adobe Ideas (now Illustrator Draw) and others have been updated with better integration features.

On the desktop front, the update includes better touchscreen support for Windows 8, 3D printing features, playback support for 4k on Premiere Pro and 3D support for Adobe After Effects, among others. The most awaited event of the conference, the Sneaks night offers a preview of the prototype technology that Adobe is experimenting with, like Shake Reduction in the past. This time, the photography-centric features showcased were #Defog, that attempts to clear up haze, and #TimeOfDay that lets you do just that for an image.

All Images: Focus Photography Festival



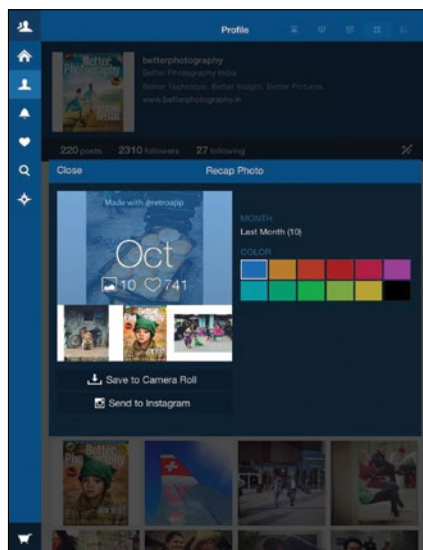
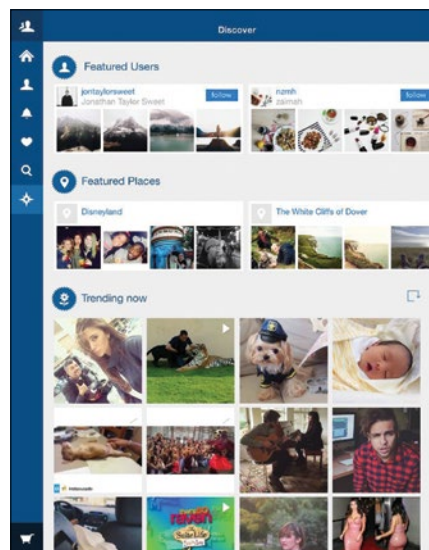
# CAUTION!

HIGH - SPEED TRAFFIC ZONE.BROWSE CAREFULLY.



[www.overdrive.in](http://www.overdrive.in)

## APP REVIEW



### Retro for iPad

The lack of a native Instagram app for the iPad (you can use the iPhone app on the iPad) is something that has always struck me as strange. I think a social network based on serving you stunning everyday images deserves something a lot better, especially for tablets. Enter, Retro, a dedicated viewer for Instagram available for the iPad. Beside basic features like commenting, liking and sharing images, there are a few things that make it truly a great experience. It is fast, responsive and designed for convenience. You can swipe through images, to go next/previous, once they pop up. The app allows you to view images in different ways—single column, grid with and without comments, and thumbnail views. Unlike the explore tab on Instagram, that just shows you trending images and the ones that people you follow have liked, Retro also gives you suggestions on who you should follow and places you can explore through images. While the app is free, there is a Premium version that costs Rs. 190 and lets you go ad free and log into multiple accounts.

— Written by Aditya Nair

## Godrej to Power BP's Cellphone Contests

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Godrej and *Better Photography* have come together to give you the *Cellphone Travel Photos Powered by Godrej GP Portable Powerbank* contest. Share the most stunning travel images, that you made with your mobile device.

The grand prize winner will win a 6000mAh Godrej GP Portable Powerbank, a perfect accessory for the smartphone photographer. The winning image will also be featured in the magazine along with the honourable mentions as well. To participate in this contest, visit [www.goo.gl/Xo5hDf](http://www.goo.gl/Xo5hDf)

## The Great Action Camera Market Flood

Attempting a coup in the action camera market seems to have become something of a trend lately. In the last few months, the market has seen announcements from HTC with a 16MP

146° field of view camera, Ricoh with a 360° Theta M15 and the WG-30, the Polaroid Cube, Kodak's Pixpro SP360 Action Camera. All these cameras range from around Rs.8000–Rs.29,000.

However, reigning champion GoPro should not have much to worry about at the moment. They seem to have beaten competitors by introducing the GoPro Hero for USD 129 (approx. Rs. 8000) and have entered the video market with the 4k capable Hero 4 Black. Currently, there isn't really a market for 360° cameras. If that changes in the near future, it will be a relatively simple matter for GoPro to introduce a Hero 360.



## FIP's 27th Convention Held at Varanasi

The 27th National Convention of Federation of Indian Photography (FIP) was held in Varanasi on 17–19 October. The convention was hosted by Foto Petal, a 15-year-old photography club in Varanasi. Around 265 delegates from all over India participated in the convention.

The event was presided by Anil Risal Singh and *Better Photography's* Chief Editor K Madhavan Pillai delivered the keynote address. Additionally, Vinay Narain Parelkar, Thresh Kapoor, Sushanta Benarjee, Tirtha Dasgupta, Rajendra Prasad, Shambhu Das,



C R Sathyanarayana, Gautam Sen, Ajit Mondal and B R Thekkan conducted talks and presentations. In the three days that the delegates spent in Varanasi, they inaugurated a school, attended various workshops, photowalks and activities organised by FIP.

## Sigma India Unveils New Lenses in Bengaluru

Sigma India officially unveiled the Sigma 150–600mm f/5–6.3 DG Sports and the 18–300mm f/3.5–6.3 DC Macro OS HSM Contemporary lenses. This took place at the opening event of their first hands-on store in Bengaluru on 20 November.





## TechNova Partners with Canson Infinity

With a view to expand its reach, TechNova Imaging Systems has come together with Canson Infinity to offer their Inkjet Fine Art Paper in India.

TechNova is offering a select range of papers, namely the BFK Rives, a one-mould made traditional printmaking paper, the Rag

Photographique—which is a 100% cotton museum grade paper and the Plantine Fibre Rag which is a digital darkroom paper.

Also included are the Baryta Photographique suited for black and white photography and the Arches Aquarelle Rag which is a mould-made watercolour paper.

## Symbiosis School of Photography's Exhibition

Titled *Bene Captus*, the exhibition was held at the NCPA in Mumbai from 18–24 November. The images made by the students of the Symbiosis School of Photography depicted their skill in various genres.

### LOOK WHO'S SHOOTING



**Vasantha Yoganathan** is a photographer based in France. He was recently announced as a finalist in the IdeasTap Photographic Award with Magnum Photos.

## A Myth of Two Souls

As a child, Vasantha Yoganathan and his siblings heard a story of epic proportions. It involved gods, goddesses, a monkey kingdom and a mighty hero. These stories settled somewhere in his mind and when he visited India a couple of years ago, he found the influence of the same story, The Ramayana, very much alive in everyday India.

With more research, he realised that he had to dig deeper and depict this grand story that finds religious roots all over the Indian subcontinent.

"This project is a personal and modern retelling of a timeless myth. The objective is to produce pictures and texts that will reflect the imaginary realm emerging from The Ramayana and its influence on everyday life," he says. So far, Vasantha has visited India three times to photograph places linked to The Ramayana.

To view more of his images from the project, visit [www.betterphotography.in](http://www.betterphotography.in)

— Written by Natasha Desai



“Rama, wild of sorrow, travels across the country looking for Sita, in vain. He then decides to ask Hanuman for help, General of the army of monkeys,” he says.

Vasantha Yoganathan

**“I want to photograph the distinctive nature of the Indian subcontinent guided by the epic of The Ramayana as a common thread.”**

# Better Photography

Our ever curious and passionate love affair with the camera will never cease. And so be it as Better Photography, India's first magazine completely devoted to the art and science of photography presents an expansive imagery like no other can. It is also the best-selling photography magazine in India and South Asia.

[www.betterphotography.in](http://www.betterphotography.in)

# Not About the Image



Ami Vitale

Photography is not about the camera. It's not even about the beautiful images we create. It is about telling powerful stories. Photography is a tool for creating awareness and understanding across cultures, communities, and countries; a tool to make sense of our commonalities in the world we share. And I believe the way to find common ground is by seeing yourself in others.

A lot of my work involves traveling to foreign countries and living in remote places. My job is to become invisible and get close to people and wildlife, so I can bring their stories to life. For me, the intimate moments always matter the most. It's no different being in my home state of Montana, USA than it is being in a country five thousand miles away.


For starters, I read everything I can about the place that I'll be visiting, especially local newspapers and social media. Local stories give me clues about what's really happening in a place and I also make it a point of befriending other photographers and sources.

Secondly, I try to fit in with the scene. Understated is always best. Sensitivity for the norms of where you are goes a long way to being

accepted. I also avoid looking like the stereotypical photographer (black cargo pants or vests with lots of pockets).

In one case, I was in China where the first female giant panda was being released back into the wild. I dressed myself up as a tree so as not to scare her. The director of the panda program was so touched, he came running up to me, hugged me, and exclaimed, "You get to hold two baby pandas! President Obama, he only held one baby panda."

The doors opened and I got excellent access for the rest of the story, and I got far stronger images because of it. Later, the other photographers and I all dressed as pandas so we could get behind-the-scenes access to the panda training center where they train captive-born pandas to go back into the wild.

If there is only one thing you take away from this, I hope it's the understanding that all of us are not only photographers, but we are storytellers. There is a beautiful, universal truth everywhere and, if you peek under the veil, you'll find a wondrous commonality between us. I hope that in your travels, you use your camera not just as an extension of your eye but also as an extension of your heart. 



*This text has been excerpted from Ami Vitale's blog [www.amivitale.com](http://www.amivitale.com) where it originally appeared for B&H Photo's Explora Blog. Her journey as a Nikon Ambassador and National Geographic photographer has taken her to 89 countries, where she has witnessed upheaval, surreal beauty and the enduring power of the human spirit.*



# GearGuide

## HOW WE TEST

### Product Categorisation

We first segregate products into categories for the purpose of equitability in testing. The DSLR is divided into entry-level, semi-professional and professional categories. For compacts, we distinguish between advanced and basic compact cameras. Similarly, we also test consumer and pro lenses, flashguns, printers, and other photographic accessories and gear.

### The Process

We primarily test for features, performance, build, ergonomics, warranty and support. While this remains constant, the weightage we give to these parameter differs from category to category, because different types of consumers have diverse expectations from products.

### Final Ratings

Under each main parameter, we list out hundreds of individual variables (for eg. colour accuracy for individual colours in different lighting, individual features, dynamic range, center-to-edge definition, light falloff, etc) against which we either give points or simply mark 'yes' or 'no'. Thus, we arrive at a score for that parameter, and then, the final score, denoted as a percentage. Additionally, based on the current pricing of a product, a star rating for 'Value for Money' is considered. Value for Money does not affect the final percentage, because prices for products change constantly.

### Our Seals of Approval

Any product that scores 80% or higher in individual tests gets 'BP Recommended'—a seal of approval from our team. In comparison tests, we also tag products as 'BP Best Performer' and 'BP Best Value for Money'.

### BP Excellence Awards

At the end of the calendar year, the highest rated products in each category automatically win the Better Photography Excellence Award. This is Better Photography's recognition of the very best products launched in the course of the year, and the companies that made them.



Sony Alpha 5100

# Video Guns Blazing

The entry-level Sony Alpha A5100 borrows several features from the mid level A6000, but the real star of this camera is video. Raj Lalwani finds out.

**T**he Sony A5100 is a camera that comes at a price point where you are literally spoilt with options. Does one buy a DSLR? An interchangeable-lens mirrorless like this one? Or would you rather avoid both and buy a high-end compact camera? It's an interesting question, and the answer is different for different users, as I realised while testing this new camera.

### Features

The A5100 is supposed to be an update of the NEX-5T, but borrows many features from the Sony Alpha A6000, including its 24.3MP sensor, Bionz X Processor and 4D focus technology. It has WiFi, NFC and a maximum burst speed of 6fps.

One of the most exciting things about the A5100 is its list of video features, which is way more exhaustive than what one would expect at this price point. Besides the obvious advantage of being able to shoot 1080p60 video, the camera

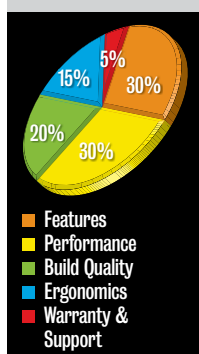
also supports the new XAVC S codec. This is something that is not there in the more expensive A6000, and was only introduced with the RX100 III. The camera also can shoot 720p HD video at 120fps, thus helping you get a super slow-mo look!

With higher bit rates and superior tonality, the video has more finesse than anything at this price point. Zebra pattern, focus peaking, a marker display, manual exposure and uncompressed video via HDMI are some of the other high-end video features on display.

### Handling

The A5100 is light, feels solid and has a nice grip. And though the inside guts are more akin to the A6000, the body is definitely more entry-level. There is no EVF and sadly, no Multi-Interface hot shoe either. The camera's predecessor had a small flash that would clip on to the hot shoe... so while I admire the fact that Sony managed to fit in a built-in flash, the missing hot shoe isn't optimal. It simply

### WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS



TEST

**Canon G7 X**The 1-inch sensor  
advanced compact**38**

TEST

**Carl Zeiss Otus**55mm f/1.4  
Simply the best?**46**

TEST

**WD My Passport**Wireless 2TB  
Image transfer made easy**48**

means one can't use a hot shoe-mounted microphone, a big omission especially as the camera doesn't have a mic input jack. Given the multitude of video features, this prevents an otherwise impressively specced camera from being a serious video device.

**Performance**

The headlines are all being taken up by 4D autofocus, a technology that is shared with more expensive high-end cameras like the A6000 and A77M2. That may lead one to believe that the focusing system of the A5100 is as good as the A77M2. To put it straight, it isn't. The A77M2 is an astonishingly fast camera and though the A5100 is reasonably speedy, it comes nowhere close to the APS-C flagship.

According to the company, 4D refers to the fourth dimension, that is, time. It allows a camera to predict where the subject would be, as time passes and it moves around the frame. Curiously enough, the camera is able to predict this when the subject is moving

towards the camera, but not if the subject is moving away from the camera.

I believe the 4D moniker is just a bit of branding, a different way of describing predictive AF, a technology that is there in many other cameras. Although, in most mirrorless cameras, predictive AF does not work well. The A5100 manages to track movement extremely well, when shooting at the wide end of the kit zoom. The story changes a bit when zoomed in, or when shooting at close-up distances... that is when continuous autofocus struggles to keep up with the subject.

It may not be as fast as a DSLR and the lens lineup is not friendly towards an action shooter, but for street photography, candid shots of friends and photos shot in one's day-to-day excursions, this Sony does well.

The touchscreen of the A5100, along with its 179 AF points that are distributed all over the frame, make it superbly easy to command the camera where to focus, especially for off-centre subjects. That's just as well, for if you actually want to change the

**The A5100 is a great camera for day-to-day photography. If you want to invest in a system of lenses though, the competition is far stronger.**

**I like the fact that one can customise the buttons to quickly access the flash mode and compensation.**  
Exposure: 1/13sec at f/11  
(ISO 1600)



## Test Shots



## Soft JPEG Files, and a Weak, But Useful Pop-up Flash

The flash is not very strong, but was sufficient enough for fill, despite stopping down the lens to get both the meter and man sharp.



## Hunting for Focus in Low Light

As a result of the low light in the train, the AF got fooled and would hunt for focus; manual focus and focus peaking saved the day.

## PLUS

- Great video features
- Speedy AF
- Excellent sensor

## MINUS

- No mic input
- No hot shoe
- Excess NR

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AF settings and points, you need to go deep into a menu, an ergonomic trait that affects a lot of Sonys.

Battery life is very good by entry-level mirrorless standards, but in-camera USB charging is a roadblock. The absence of a dedicated charger means that the charging process is painfully slow. Moreover, you cannot prepare an extra battery while you are shooting with another, and that would be a downside for the serious travel photographer. Invest in a dedicated charger and two or three batteries if you like to shoot for long hours.

Though the burst rates are not as fast as the A6000, the photos made at 6fps get written fast and the buffer clears quickly. The new processor has really taken the entry-level Sony camera to the next level.

Image quality is usually one of Sony's strengths, and the A5100 does not disappoint. Dynamic range is fantastic and the much proven 24.3MP produces great detail in the RAW files. One can use up to ISO 3200 without any worries. Beyond this, you may need to be a little careful in terms of exposure and postprocessing.

The hindrance in the way of getting the best out of this sensor is the kit lens and the JPEG engine. Kit lenses have never been the best tools for quality-conscious users, but in recent times, Olympus and Fujifilm have redefined the quality one can expect. The Sony 16–50mm that was pretty decent on the 16MP sensor of the NEX-5T, is not able to do justice to the 24.3MP body here.

While the default rendering can be overtly vibrant, it is a very pleasing look.

## ALSO LOOK FOR

- Olympus E-M10
- Panasonic GM1

## ERGONOMICS

## Front



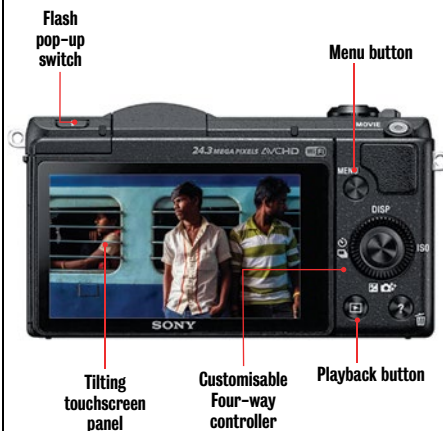
From the front, the A5100 looks extremely similar to the NEX-5 series. It is lightweight and though the kit power zoom lens does not have the best of optics, it pairs well with the small-sized body.

## Top



Unlike its predecessor, the A5100 does not have a hot shoe, and instead, just has a built-in flash. Maybe Sony believes that this category of consumer would not bother with an external flashgun.

## Rear



The back is familiar in design and similar to previous mirrorless cameras from the company. There is no Electronic Viewfinder, but the camera does have a touchscreen, which comes handy while shooting video.

## SPECIFICATIONS

Model name	Sony Alpha 5100
MRP	Rs. 45,990
Effective pixels	24.3MP, 6000 x 4000 pixels
Sensor size, type	23.5 x 15.6mm, CMOS
Aspect ratio (w:h)	3:2 / 16:9
Focusing type, modes	Contrast Detect, Phase Detect, Multi-area, Center, Selective single-point, Tracking, Single, Continuous, Touch, Face Detection, Live View
AF points	179
Focal length multiplier	1.5x
Metering	Multi, Center-weighted, Spot
Shutterspeed range	30sec-1/4000sec
Exp. compensation	-/+3 EV (at 1/3 EV steps)
ISO	Auto, 100-25600
White balance	Auto WB, 10 Presets, Custom White Balance
Drive modes	Single Shooting, Continuous Shooting (Lo, Hi), Self-timer, Self-timer (Cont.): 10sec (3, 5 images), Cont. Bracket: 0.3-3.0EV, Single Bracket: 0.3-3.0EV, White Balance Bracket (Lo, Hi), DRO Bracket (Lo, Hi)
Built-in flash	Pop-up, 4m at ISO 100
Flash modes	Auto, Fill-flash, Slow Sync, Redeye reduction
LCD	3-inch tilting touchscreen, 9,21,600 dot
Viewfinder	None
Image stabilisation	No
Storage types	SD, SDHC, SDXC, Memory Stick Pro Duo/Pro-HG Duo
Wireless	Built-in
Video	Yes, Full HD
Weather Sealing	No
Dimensions, Weight	110 x 63 x 36mm, 283g
Timelapse Recordings	Yes (via optional app)

While Sony's JPEG handling has improved over the years, Noise Reduction is still extremely aggressive (even when set to Low... you can't switch it off). For a camera targeting consumers, I expected better JPEGs.

## Conclusion

The Sony A5100 is a decent upgrade to what was already an efficient entry-level mirrorless camera. The sensor has its advantages but the extra detail that it can capture gets negated by the quality of the kit lens and an overzealous Noise Reduction.

Video and AF are the two big advantages. Video, especially, and even though there is no mic provision, a consumer would love the quality and convenience. The AF, while not as magical as 4D hypes it to be, is quicker and more assured than any APS-C mirrorless camera at this price point. The A5100 has quite some way to go in terms of matching a DSLR in terms of battery life, lens options and continuous autofocus. The ergonomic control and lens choice, too, is not as good as some other mirrorless cameras. But for the kind of user who wants an easy-to-use camera but is very quality conscious, the A5100 is a great choice.

A serious photographer, though, may want to take a good, hard look at the RX100 series, or a camera like the Canon G7 X that we have tested in this issue. Especially if you are going to stick to a basic kit zoom range, the 1-inch cameras have faster lenses, more effective stabilisation, better control and a more solid, professional feel. **B**

## Noise Test



The A5100 has an excellent sensor that allows fantastic image quality across the ISO range! Sure, the 24.3MP sensor may not be as good as the older 16MP sensor in terms of pixel-level quality at ISO 6400. But then again, if you downsize the images to 16MP, you don't see any difference. ISO 12800, while quite noisy, is still a nice option to have. I will highly recommend that you shoot RAW as the JPEG Noise Reduction is a little overenthusiastic, and does not get the best out of the camera.

## FINAL RATINGS

<b>Features</b> Class-leading video features, no hot shoe, 6fps, no mic input	27/30
<b>Performance</b> Excellent image quality in RAW, soft JPEGs, decently fast AF, slow charging time	25/30
<b>Build Quality</b> Sturdy body with a well designed LCD pivot	17/20
<b>Ergonomics</b> Inefficient tile-based menu system, slippery handgrip	11/15
<b>Warranty &amp; Support</b> Two-year warranty, limited service facilities	3/5

# OVERALL 83%

**Who should buy it?** Travel enthusiasts and filmmakers on a budget.

**Why?** In terms of AF and writing speed, the camera is a lot faster than its predecessors. Though there is no mic input, the video features are way better than anything at this price.

**Value for Money** ★★★★★☆



Every splitsecond, the two men would gaze in a different direction, and I used the Burst mode for the perfect shoot. Impressively, the A5100 never slowed down.





Canon PowerShot G7 X

# Evolution in Progress

The G series has earned itself a place of pride with photographers. Can the new Canon PowerShot G7 X recreate this magic? Shridhar Kunte reports.

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**A**lmost every G series camera in the past has done well, especially with serious photographers and professionals, because of three reasons... they were robustly built, had the essential features, and delivered good image quality. While this may not sound like much, getting this balancing act right is not something that all camera manufacturers managed to do well.

The latest in the G series, the G7 X, is built around a completely new 1-inch CMOS sensor. Canon was last to enter the mirrorless camera segment, where they have been on the back foot. Turning to 1-inch format is, decidedly, a wise move.

A 1-inch sensor is significantly smaller than APS-C. Consequently, low light performance and resolutions also would be lower. Yet, it comes with the advantages of being much larger than regular compact camera sensors, and yet small enough to fit into a compact body.

## Features

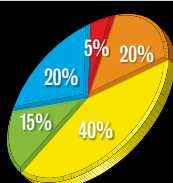
Canon has positioned the new 20.2MP G7 X in between the PowerShot S120 (with a 1/1.7-inch 12.1MP compact camera sensor) and the G1 X Mark II (a larger 1.5-inch 14.3MP sensor). While the camera is much smaller than G1 X Mark II, it is the same size as its closest competitor, the Sony RX 100 III (also equipped with a 1-inch sensor).

## A Screen that Flips all the Way



The obvious benefits of a screen that flips is not just for the selfie crowd, but also for including oneself in group shots with the camera set on a tripod.

## WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS



- Features
- Performance
- Build Quality
- Ergonomics
- Warranty & Support

I was not surprised when Sony reduced the zoom range from 28-100mm in the RX100 II to 24-70mm in the RX100 III, in order to deliver a brighter maximum aperture of f/2.8 at the telephoto end. This made sense. However, I must admit that I was pleasantly surprised, and intrigued, to see that Canon managed to equip the G7 X with a 24-100mm f/1.8-2.8 lens. This not only delivers an increased reach of about 50% over the 24-70mm of the RX100 III, but also offers the same, efficient aperture range. The lens uses ultra high refractive index aspherical elements, and features a 9-bladed circular aperture diaphragm.

Like the RX100 III, the G7 X also has a tilting screen. However, to Canon's advantage, it is touch-sensitive, allowing you to reposition AF areas, enable touch-release and access functions through the screen.

A good feature borrowed from G1 X Mark II, and also available in the RX100 Mark III, is its in-built Neutral Density (ND) filter. The 3-stop ND filter will allow you to shoot at much slower shutter speeds in bright

conditions. A stand-out feature of the G7 X, over the Sony, is a manually controllable shutter speed range of 1/2000sec to 250sec. Yes... this is no misprint!

There are some restrictions in the use of extremely long shutter speeds though. Up to 30 seconds, the G7 X necessitates using ISO 3200 or lower (the maximum ISO available is ISO 12,800). Between 40 and 250 seconds, you need to select the lowest ISO setting available... ISO 125.

On the other hand, while both the G7 X and RX100 III are fully video capable (1920 x 1080 at 60P) for most practical video shooting scenarios, the RX100 III has a few additional video features like uncompressed HDMI output and XAVC S (50Mbps) and AVCHD 2.0 encoding.

### Handling

Then GX 7 is a small, pocketable camera. In terms of design, the GX 7 resembles the PowerShot S120, rather than G series family (including the lack of a viewfinder). The body is superbly crafted in metal and ▶

⚠ Despite the large shadow areas, noise levels and colour shifts are well in control.  
Exposure: 1/250sec at f/4 (ISO 3200)

### WHAT'S IN THE BOX

- Canon PowerShot G7 X camera
- Battery Pack NB-13L
- Battery Charger CB-2LH
- Wrist Strap WS-DC12
- Digital Camera Solution CD-ROM
- Warranty card



All photographs by Shridhar Kunte



## Test Shots

**Excellent sharpness and colour tonality**

Both JPG and RAW files display a high dynamic range and level of detail that very few other compact cameras can reproduce, thanks to the 1-inch sensor.

**The extra reach of the 24-100mm zoom lens**

The additional zoom afforded by the G7 X makes it an ideal travel companion. It has its obvious benefits when getting closer to the subject is not an option.

**ALSO LOOK FOR**

- Sony RX100 III
- Panasonic Lumix DMC-LX100

feels sturdy. There is no handgrip, but a thumbrest on the back helps. While the buttons at the back seem to be cramped, in actual use, I had no accidental presses.

On the top right is a double-decker dial. The mode dial sits on the top of an exposure compensation dial. Both dials are within reach of the thumb and forefinger. They both have different diameters and makes changing exposure quick and easy, even in the dark. I especially liked the large exposure compensation dial. Both dials offer enough resistance to ensure that they cannot be accidentally shifted.

The 3-inch LCD on the back can be vertically articulated, and flips up to 180° for self-portraits. The LCD of the Sony RX100 III can be angled downward too, by about 45°, for shooting overhead shots. I did not think of this as a big disadvantage for the GX 7 though. All I had to do to shoot over people's heads was to hold the GX 7 upside down and release the shutter with the thumb of my left hand.

On the negative front, the tripod socket is off-centre from the lens axis, which makes critical adjustments difficult in some cases (while shooting panoramas, for instance). When mounted on a tripod, changing the battery or the memory card is difficult.

While I personally found the LCD perfectly adequate for almost every shooting situation, for professionals who are used to cameras with viewfinders, the lack of an EVF on the G7 X could be a drawback. This is a distinct advantage with the RX100 III.

**Performance**

Considering the relatively small size sensor, I found myself completely astonished by the image quality that the G7 X can produce, even at higher ISO settings. The fine details are excellent, even in the shadows. The colours are wonderfully crisp and tonal variation is beautifully controllable. The camera's metering did a good job, irrespective of the difficult luminance levels. I could not have expected more.

**PLUS**

- Image quality
- Fast lens
- Touch screen

**MINUS**

- No viewfinder
- Average battery life

**ERGONOMICS****Front**

The control ring that surrounds the lens can be programmed to control various shooting parameters. It has detents that click. The large lens barrel helps to secure a good grip while shooting. The self timer indicator also works as AF assist lamp.

**Top**

The majority of controls are placed to the right hand side on the top. The power switch is recessed with the top surface avoids accidental operation. An accessory shoe or hot shoe is not present. The pop-up flash can be raised with help of slider switch.

**Rear**

The button layout on the back is similar to the PowerShot S120. They are closely spaced but large and quite straightforward for speedy access to the most important controls. For video recording there is a dedicated button on the top right corner.

## SPECIFICATIONS

Model name	Canon PowerShot G7 X
MRP	Rs 47,995/-
Sensor size, type	1-inch, Canon high-sensitivity CMOS
Effective pixels, Max image size	20.2 megapixels, 5472 x 3648 pixels
LCD size	3-inch
Lens Focal length	24-100mm (35mm equivalent)
ISO range	125 - 12800
Aperture range	f/1.8 - f/16 (W), f/2.8 - 16 (T)
Shutterspeed	40 - 1/2000 sec
Metering modes	Evaluative, Center-weighted average, Spot
File formats	Still: RAW, JPEG, Video: H.264
Battery	Lithium-Ion rechargeable battery
Storage	SD/SDHC/SDXC card
Dimensions, weight	103 (W) x 60.4 (H) x 40.4 (D) camera only 279gm

The lens complements the sensor rather well. As expected, it delivered its sharpest results in the middle of the aperture and zoom range. Corner sharpness is affected at the widest apertures, visibly so at both ends of the zoom. There is no visible distortion in the images captured, although I think there would be some amount of in-camera correction. Control over flare is exceptionally good. There are slight, negligible traces of purple fringing in high contrast situations, visible only at 100%.


The AF speed of the camera is good in normal light, but just about average in poor light. In terms of AF speed and accuracy, the G7 X cannot compete with other mirrorless cameras. The IS showed a commendable performance with slow shutterspeeds. I frequently found myself

shooting at 1/8sec with a very good ratio of good shots to blurred ones.

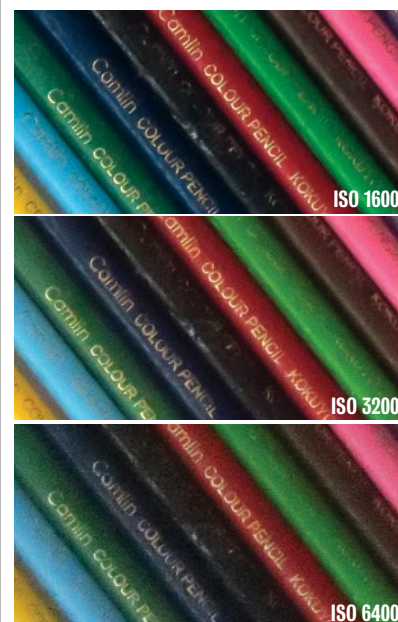
The G7 X is power hungry. During the first few days of on-field testing, it was frustrating to run out of charge in the middle of a session. Later, I began to conserve my shots. I managed about 200 images per charge. It is good that Canon supplies the charger separately to charge spare batteries outside the camera.

## Conclusion

Considering this is the company's first use of a 1-inch sensor, I can say that the G7 X is a wholly respectable effort by Canon. The price tag of Rs 47,995/- places the camera between Sony's older RX 100 II and RX100 III (which we also had with us at the time of testing the G7 X). The RX100 III has slightly faster AF, is marginally more responsive, has better video features, and has an EVF.

However, the advantages of the G7 X are quite evident. While the image quality with both cameras are comparable and are exceptionally good, the G7 X features a fast lens with a significantly bigger zoom range, a large shutterspeed range that can be hugely useful, excellent ergonomics, and fantastic build, for a lower price. If you are a purist looking for exceptional image quality, handling finesse, and can ignore the lack of a viewfinder, the Canon G7 X offers very good value great value. 

## Noise Test



Images captured from ISO 125 to ISO 3,200 impressed me a lot. All the way to this point, noise is kept almost entirely at bay, while retaining plenty of fine detail, even in shadow areas. The top settings of ISO 6,400 and 12,800 do show a steady decline in quality along with an increase in noise levels, but even these remain perfectly usable at smaller sizes.

## FINAL RATINGS

<b>Features</b>	18/20
No hot shoe or EVF, 24-100mm zoom range, extended shutterspeeds	
<b>Performance</b>	37/40
Excellent dynamic range, good colours, sharp lens, no visible distortion	
<b>Build Quality</b>	13/15
Durable metal body, very sturdy,	
<b>Ergonomics</b>	18/20
Dedicated exposure compensation dial, good button layout	
<b>Warranty &amp; Support</b>	4/5
Two year warranty, widely spread service network	

# OVERALL 90%

**Who should buy it?** Advanced photographers who want a large sensor pocketable camera, great image quality, added zoom reach with excellent maximum apertures.

**Why?** The PowerShot G7 X is a good combination of superb image quality and great handling.

**Value for Money** ★★★★★☆



The excellent high ISO performance along with an extended dynamic range preserves tonal details. Exposure: 1/15sec at f/4 (ISO 3200)





Zeiss Otus 55mm f/1.4

# The Need for Perfection

Raj Lalwani dissects the hype around the Zeiss Otus 55mm f/1.4 to see if it is really the greatest piece of optic that has ever been made.

The Zeiss Otus 55mm f/1.4 has already become stuff of legend, barely a few months after its announcement. In fact, even when just a few pieces were out in the world, there was a clamour that only rose in volume and declared, with almost-fanboy enthusiasm... best lens ever.

So let me end this review before I begin it. After using it for three weeks and repeatedly having to lift back my jaw that kept dropping, I concur, hand on heart, with the initial hype... It is the best piece of optics we have tested, without any shred of doubt. Whether it is the best lens for you, that's an entirely different story, and needs to be analysed carefully.

## Features

In trying to achieve a near-perfect set of optics, the lens itself has become something that may ward off a lot of users. It is huge... much bigger than similar lenses and at Rs. 2,69,950/-, fantastically expensive.

The size is also largely due to the fact that the lens actually covers an image circle larger than 'full frame' and the optical construction is actually inspired by medium format lenses. According to the company, the Distagon design with its considerably longer construction makes it possible to get consistently excellent correction from corner to corner of the frame and extremely low image field curvature at f/1.4. The apochromatic nature of the lens means all wavelengths of visible light meet at the

same point. This minimises smearing and vastly improves visible detail.

## Handling

The Otus is MF only. I personally see that as an advantage. When a lens aims at a quality benchmark as high as this, the rigour of manual focus is a constraint that is vital to get the best out of the lens.

The focusing ring is outstanding. Smooth operation with just enough resistance, the tactility and feel make this an experience that would make it difficult for you to use 'lesser' lenses in the future.

That said, the big constraint that comes through while using the Otus is the fact that modern-day DSLR viewfinders are not well tuned for using MF. When shooting at f/1.4, the focus confirmation light is not much help. It stays on for too long even when you turn the focusing ring past the optimal point. If you are a serious user, invest in a focusing screen. The finish of the Otus looks and feels beautiful, but it tends to get scratched and dirty very easily.

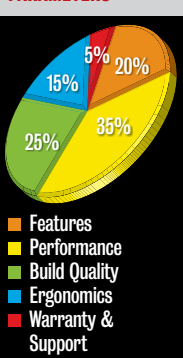
## PLUS

- Very sharp
- Excellent micro contrast

## MINUS

- No weathersealing
- Size
- Price

## WEIGHTAGE OF PARAMETERS



## SPECIFICATIONS

Model name	Zeiss Otus 55mm f/1.4
MRP	Rs. 2,48,000
Lens construction	12 elements in 10 groups
Min. focusing distance	0.5m
Diaphragm blades	9
Filter diameter	83mm
Dimensions	141 x 144mm
Weight	970g

The development of the Otus lenses has been Zeiss' response to the recent high megapixel sensors reaching new levels of excellence.



Acquiring perfect focus at  $f/1.4$  is not easy without a focusing screen. But once you do so the detail and quality of bokeh is superb.  
Exposure: 1/320sec at  $f/1.4$  (ISO 1000)  
Raj Lalwani

The lack of weathersealing is a little bizarre, considering how enormous and overbuilt the lens otherwise is.

## Performance

Aside from all its optical brilliance, the Otus just has a look that differentiates it from other lenses. While shooting with the Zeiss, I also had another 50mm lens with me. At low resolutions the superior sharpness of the Otus was not so noticeable, yet the Zeiss images had a distinct look that made them immediately recognisable.

Microcontrast—the ability of the lens to differentiate between increasingly tiny details of nearly similar tonal values—is visibly high, and admirably so. This gives images a distinctly three-dimensional look. Bokeh is beautifully smooth. I was very impressed by the subtle manner in which the lens renders out-of-focus areas in the foreground.

The lens outresolved the 20MP sensor of the Canon 6D that we tested if on quite easily. Forget the concept of sweet spot. This is a lens that gets as sharp as it does at  $f/1.4$ . The only real thing you gain by stopping down is a bit of microcontrast, besides of course, an increase in DOF.

This is a lens whose measured MTF is far superior to the theoretical MTF of other


lenses. I actually suspect that the 'Otii' may be the only lenses of the current lot that may stay truly futureproof for a long time, even if the megapixel count in camera sensors continues to grow.

Flare, ghosting, coma, distortion are superbly controlled. There is a fair amount of vignetting though, at the widest aperture.

## Conclusion

If you are someone who's asking whether you need the Otus, you probably don't. This is an incredibly specialised lens, probably the kind whose magic you'd continue to see even when sensors get into the 40–50MP and more territory.

If you don't have a 36MP body, it can be argued that you don't need the Otus as the detail advantage is relatively lesser on lower-megapixel bodies. There is also the Sigma 50mm  $f/1.4$  Art lens which comes reasonably close to the quality (though not the look) of the Zeiss, adds autofocus and is one fourth the price!

But with products like these, it's never really about the price tag anyway. There will always be a select few photographers who would not care about cost and value for money as long as they get the unique look they crave. And for them, the Otus is as good as it gets. 

## FINAL RATINGS

<b>Features</b>	18/20
Apochromatic design, low image field curvature, Distagon design	
<b>Performance</b>	35/35
Optically almost perfect, very sharp, Zeiss-like micro contrast, visible vignetting	
<b>Build Quality</b>	22/25
Scruffy finish, no weathersealing	
<b>Ergonomics</b>	13/15
Intuitive focusing ring, extremely large lens	
<b>Warranty &amp; Support</b>	3/5
Replaceable in case of manufacturing defect for 3 years	

**OVERALL 91%**

**Who should buy it?** Those who demand the very best in quality and do not need convenience.

**Why?** The Otus is a difficult lens to use. You need excellent technique, patience and strong arms, but the rewards are infinite.

**Value for Money** ★★☆☆☆☆





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Western Digital My Passport Wireless 2TB

# Cuts Across Platforms

The Western Digital My Passport Wireless 2TB hard drive isn't the first of its kind, but it is innovative. Ambarin Afsar tells you what sets it apart.

**Western Digital is the only manufacturer providing a wireless storage device with a capacity of 2TB. I only wish that its interface and speed issues had been resolved.**

For us photographers, there is barely anything as important as our cameras, and the only thing that comes close is our storage devices. When I first found out that I'd be reviewing a wireless hard drive, I was very curious. I'd heard of such devices, but never tried one out. What struck me about it was the fact that I'd be able to transfer images on the go.

## Dual Advantage

The WD My Passport Wireless features USB 3.0, an embedded WiFi network and an inbuilt battery. It also includes support

for a dual-stream setup of 802.11n WiFi that gives it faster speeds, and an integrated SD card slot further simplifies things for those looking for hassle-free transfers.

## Using the Passport

When you connect the drive to a computer, it works as a regular external hard drive, and when you are running it on battery, it becomes a wireless mobile media server. Basically, what you can do is transfer data to and from the hard drive via tablets and smartphones, using a WD My Cloud app. You can also transfer data through a Wi-Fi enabled camera. The device can support

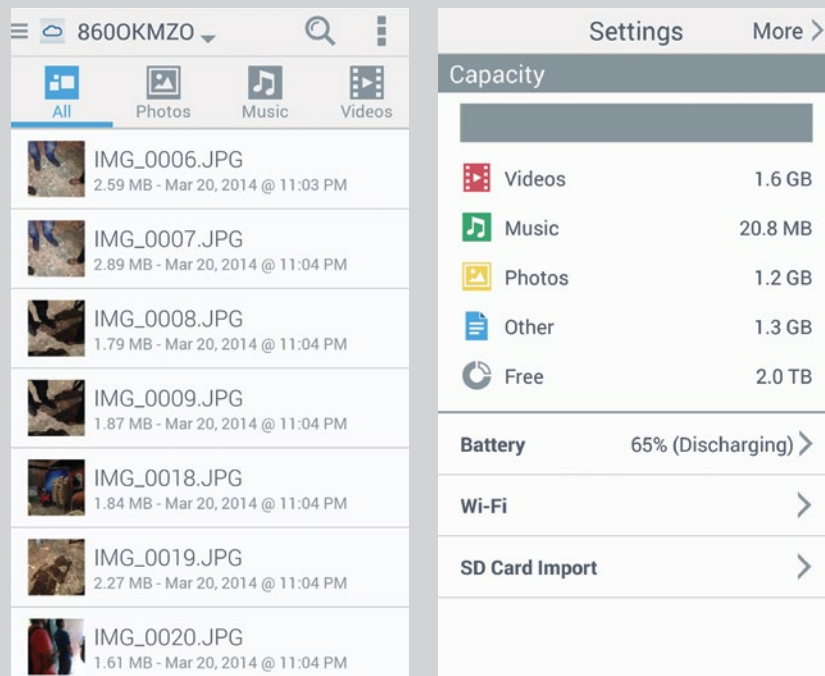
## PLUS

- Ability to stream media from a mobile device
- Multiple incoming connections

## MINUS

- No notification in app when transfer completes
- Price

### The Mobile App Interface of the WD My Cloud App on Android



#### Browsing Folders Stored on the Drive

You can see low resolution previews of the images stored on the drive, and even request for high resolution versions. The only annoying bit about the app is that it is slow, it tends to hang sometimes, and is very confusingly labelled. You need to investigate the menu in-depth to know what each option does.

#### Viewing Battery, Data Import Status

The good part about the app is that you can view how much charge you have left, along with updates about data imports. While WD claims a battery life of nearly six hours and a standby time of 20 hours, I'd take that with a pinch of salt. The hard drive discharges faster than the promised six hours.

up to eight concurrent WiFi clients for data sharing, and upto four clients for HD streaming.

#### Your Workflow through the App

The WD My Cloud app acts as the interface for file transfers, streaming, browsing through folders and so on. All you need to do is install the app from the Play Store or the Apple App Store and connect the hard drive via the app. You can now shift folders from your phone to the hard drive or playback media stored on the hard drive, or use the phone as a giant screen when you want to transfer images from a WiFi enabled camera to the hard drive.

However, you cannot use the app to browse through images on an SD card. You will need to transfer the contents of the card before you can view the photos. This is a little inconvenient, since you might want to quickly preview photos before backing them up.

#### Streams Only What Your Mobile Device Can

The My Cloud app allows you to stream only the file formats that are supported by your mobile device itself. For instance, for .MKV files, you will need to use a third party mobile app. The same goes for a Word document, Excel sheet or PDF. The app doesn't have any inbuilt support for these file types at all.

#### What We Think

The 2TB version of the hard drive is available at a price of USD 219.99 (approx. Rs. 13,600), however, the MRP of the 1TB variant being sold in India is also Rs. 13,000. This pricing strategy has left us a little confused. While the hard drive is a nifty piece of equipment, it isn't classleading. The app's interface has a few bugs that need to be smoothened out, and the transfer speeds from a mobile device to the hard drive are not exactly blazing fast. However, for relatively convenient

#### SPECIFICATIONS

Model name	WD My Passport Wireless
MRP	USD 219.99 (approx. Rs. 13,600)
Operating System	Windows 8, 7, Vista, XP, and Mac OS X
Dimensions (L X W X H)	86 x 29.8 X 127mm
Weight	0.35kg
Capacity	2TB

transfers, compact size and a huge storage capacity, the device certainly shows a lot of potential, and is definitely worth a look. But if you consider that Western Digital has entered the game quite late, and that its competitors have similar products that are priced inexpensively, the hard drive ends up seeming like a costly toy, albeit a relatively efficient one. **BB**

## FINAL RATINGS

<b>Features</b>	22/25
WiFi, 2TB storage, compatible with Windows, Apple, Android and Amazon Kindle	
<b>Performance</b>	23/30
Mobile device to storage device transfer speeds not up to par	
<b>Build Quality</b>	13/15
Seems fairly solid enough to transport	
<b>Handling</b>	16/20
Compact, sleekly designed, buggy app	
<b>Warranty &amp; Support</b>	5/10
Two years limited warranty	

# OVERALL 79%

Value for Money ★★☆☆☆



## Lexar 64GB Professional 1066x CompactFlash card

# Superfast Powerhouse

Raj Lalwani is left awestruck by the speed of this high-end card, but realises that it's not for everyone.

**L**exar 1066x card, as compared to its predecessor, the 1000x, is exciting because of a huge improvement in its potential write speed. From a maximum of 95MB/sec in the older card, this one claims to reach a maximum of 150MB/sec. In card to computer transfers, when using a USB 3.0 reader, it consistently clocked an average of 140MB/sec, which is impressive in practice.

Of course, lab test results give only a tiny part of the story, and to me, it was more important to see how this card performed on field. I tested this card with a wide variety of cameras, from the Nikon D700 to the D810, to the D4 and the Canon EOS 5D Mark III. On the D700 and the 5D Mark III, the 1066x card does not give any perceptible advantage, as compared to using an 800x card. The older 800x and 1000x cards are, thus, fast enough, if you are using an older 12MP camera or if you are shooting bursts of up to 6fps on the Mark III.

The difference came through while shooting bursts of 5fps 36.3MP RAW+JPEG data on the D810. The buffer would consistently clear out faster with the new memory card, offering an advantage of around 2–3sec. I saw a clear advantage also on the D4, while shooting incessant 11fps RAW bursts.

So strictly speaking, this card isn't for everyone. Get it only if you have a 7D Mark II, 1D X, D810, D4 or D4S, or of course, if you want to stay future proof for the next few years. Strangely though, its Indian MRP of Rs. 30,000 (for the 64GB version) is strangely exorbitant, considering that it is available for half that price on Indian e-commerce websites and for one-third the price, abroad.



### SPECIFICATIONS

- Product Name: Lexar 64GB Professional 1066x CompactFlash (Type 1) card
- MRP: Rs. 30,000
- UDMA: UDMA 7 compliant card
- Max Read Speed: 160MB/sec
- Max Write Speed: 155MB/sec
- Video Performance Guarantee: VPG-65
- Durability: Shockproof, staticproof, temperature extreme

### Product source:

Inter Foto, Mumbai  
Tel: +91-22-24925151

### RATING



## Sirui T-005X Aluminium Tripod with C-10 Ball Head

# A Little Here and There

Though this tripod is made of aluminium, its construction does not inspire much confidence, as Raj Lalwani finds out.

**T**he Sirui T-005X Aluminium Tripod with C-10 Ball Head is an extremely lightweight tripod. With legs that fold up 180°, the tripod does become really compact when you are storing it, thus making it a potential good choice for travel photographers. The centre column is removable, thus also appealing to photographers who wish to make a lot of low-angle shots.

It is easy to set up the tripod quickly, but the tripod seems to have compromised sturdiness to give some extra convenience. The twist locks on each leg extension, though easy to operate, can come off inadvertently, if you are in a hurry.

With a maximum load capacity of 4kg, the tripod claims to be ideal for compact and mirrorless cameras and “capable of holding” DSLR cameras with most lenses. That said, though I tried to mount a Nikon D750 and Canon EOS 6D (not the heaviest DSLRs around, and certainly lesser than its load capacity), the overall structure seemed rather flimsy. This is especially true, when you try to raise the tripod to its maximum height, since the bottom extension of its legs is a little too thin.

The ball head itself, included with the tripod we tested, seems quite capable. It has separate knobs for pan and tilt adjustments and is quite smooth in operation.

The Sirui T-005X seems impressive on paper, but in its actual operation, I wouldn't want to use it with a DSLR, at least. There are tripods available for lesser, with far better build quality and solidity. The low-angle capability is its big strength though, so go for it only if you use a mirrorless camera and wish to do a lot of ground-level perspective shots..

### SPECIFICATIONS

- Product Name: Sirui T-005X Aluminium Tripod with C-10 Ball Head
- MRP: Rs. 8500
- Load Capacity: 4kg
- Max Height: 139.1cm
- Max Height without column extended: 121.3cm
- Min Height: 26cm
- Retracted Height: 48cm
- Folded Length: 30cm
- Weight: 1kg



### Product source:

Foto Centre Trading Private Limited, Mumbai  
Tel: +91-22-22700909

### RATING





Better

# Cellphone Photography

## PORTRAYING IDENTITIES

Sarah Marie Waiswa on what makes for strong portraiture

- Getting People to See Your Work On Instagram
- Xperia Z3 and Z3 Compact: The Best Android Flagship?
- DIY: A Glove that Lets You Control Your Smartphone



**“The tentative, hopeful steps of stepping into the unknown, only to find something, maybe oneself, a little ways down the road.”**



## A Little Ways Down the Road

There is something about making a picture that makes me feel terribly empty. Until you've pressed the shutter and sealed the deal, the photograph is still in its making, with its various visual possibilities floating in your subconscious. You can get out any time you like... just take a step back and stay away from the finality of actually deciding what the picture will look like.

It is this constant need to make a choice that makes photography a lot like life. The only difference being that in our day-to-day everyday, it's not that easy to play something back and then delete it. Life is a little more analogue than that.

And that's probably a bit of a relief, I think. It would be so terribly boring to format all and forget everything—eternal sunshine of the photographic mind. Instead, what life gives us is a series of contact sheets. Memory notes that recall all. The moments, the opportunities, the hesitation, the choices.

It is this Pensieve in our heads that makes us who we are. It is this that lets us be, lets us see the way we see. There is probably no better way to understand oneself than to rewind, retrace and recall. Maybe that is why they say that the best way to improve your photography is to pore through your own contact sheets.

So that you know when you fell and you know when you flew. What you do the next moment is driven by all that you've done, thus far, in the unending continuum of photography and life. Like meeting a girl for the first time and wondering where you've seen her before. It's almost as if every photograph you make is a nod to the ones before, every view, a *déjà vu*.

That either makes the cycle of photography terribly boring or hopelessly romantic. The latter, perhaps, for there is always the wonder of what lies ahead. The tentative, hopeful steps of stepping into the unknown, only to find something, maybe oneself, a little ways down the road.

That's what we should all do with our photography, and that's what I'll do with my words, this month and beyond. I don't know where I'm going, but I'm on my way.

**Raj Lalwani**  
raj.lalwani@betterphotography.in



Raj Lalwani

## Untitled

by Raj Lalwani

I've always been intrigued by the ironies that surround us in the post-digital world. Here we are, lusting for the latest technology, but yearning for the imperfection of a time gone by.

**Learn how to get your work noticed on Instagram — 'A Photographer's Guide to Becoming #Instafamous'**

Turn to page 62

**Sarah Marie Waiswa combines poetry and photography—'Phoet Extraordinaire'**

Turn to page 64

*Cover photograph by Sarah Marie Waiswa*



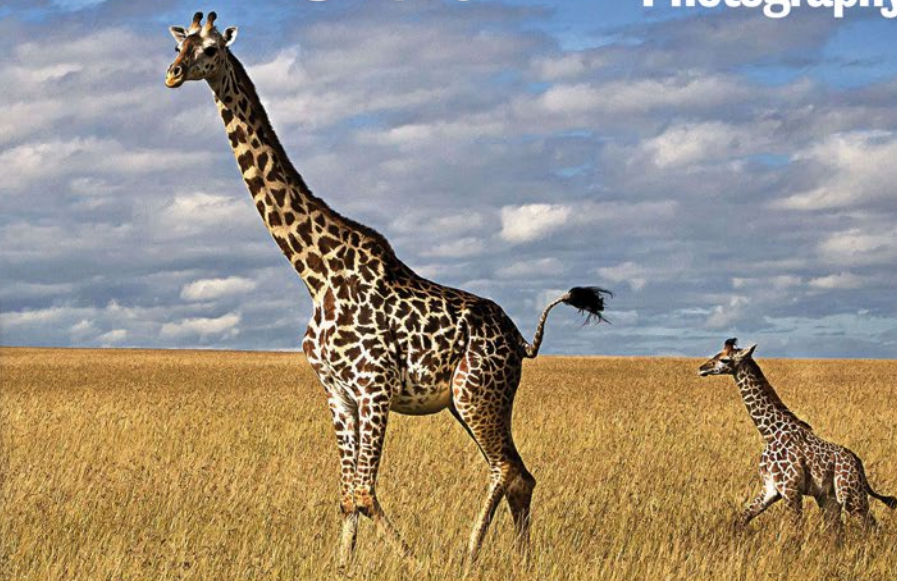
The thing that's important to know is that you never know.  
You're always sort of feeling your way.

**DIANE ARBUS**

She was an American photographer who was noted for her deeply moving black and white images of people whose normality seemed ugly or surreal, people who were labelled as freaks by society.



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Sony Xperia Z3 and Z3 Compact

# Underwater Evolution?

Sony's flagship cameraphone, the Z3, and its condensed version, the Z3 Compact, are third generation devices. What has changed over the years? Ambarin Afsar investigates, with inputs from Aditya Nair.

**S**ony makes some really efficient DSLRs and SLTs, shooting with them is quite a breeze, especially when it comes to autofocus, image quality, dynamic range and overall handling. So, its cameraphones have huge expectations to meet, especially from photographers who dedicatedly use cellphones to shoot. I've tested the Z1 and the QX10 and QX100 lens modules, and I was eager to find out what had changed two generations down the line. The Z3 and Z3 Compact have an identical camera module, processor and waterproofing. The only difference is that the Z3 has a Full HD screen, while the Z3 Compact has a 720p HD screen. So, we're going to treat this as a combined review.

## What's Amazing About the Camera

For starters? The sensor. It is a 1/2.3-inch Exmor RS sensor, which is a relatively large sensor for cellphones. It is arguably the best Android sensor in the market, and is coupled with a superb lens that gives you quite sharp images. The app has a bunch of really fun Augmented Reality (AR) filters—carried forward from the Z1—that show you dinosaurs stomping around your surroundings or fishes floating around your friends. Creative Effects like Kaleidoscope have also been carried forward, much to my joy, and the inbuilt photo editor allows you to see a history of your edits, going all the way back to Original state.

**It is wonderful to have a phone that can withstand a certain amount of tough use, but not at the cost of the overall shooting experience.**

## What's Cool About the Phone?

The waterproofing. You can dunk it in a bucket or shoot pictures in the shower or in the pool or in a fountain for all you like. The screen is bright and gorgeous to use and the dedicated camera button is an added plus.

## Sounds Too Good to Be True?

Here's the catch. So, while the image quality is awesome, there is significant shutter and focus lag, which results in missed moments. Also, all the filters, fun effects, HDR images, ISO 3200 shots take place at a resolution of 8MP. Yes, you get to shoot upto ISO 12800,



➔ What I did notice was that the images that appeared acceptably warm on the Z3, seemed a little oversaturated when viewed on a calibrated monitor.



➡ Ambient low light is rendered quite faithfully by the Z3.

but that is while using the Superior Auto mode, where the camera makes the decision for you. But this is something that no other cameraphone allows you to do, and so Sony gets a pat on the back. Also, while we did not face any waterproofing issues, a few users have complained about deterioration over long term use, in various internet forums.



### Overheating Woes

This is the third generation phone in the same series to feature the same problem. The phones overheat within a couple of minutes of usage in the Indian morning-afternoon heat and 30 seconds later, the camera shuts down. Apparently, a firmware upgrade fixes this problem, and ▶

➡ Even in contrasty low light situations, the Z3 does a decent job of capturing a range of tones.

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➡ The Burst mode does a fairly decent job of capturing action. But if you are going to be relying on single shots in order to capture the moment, then the shutter lag will leave you disappointed.

All photographs by Anbarim Ahsar



🔴 The JPEGs of the Z3 Compact hold a surprising amount of detail that can be recovered later on.

we asked Sony about it, but at the time of printing, had not received a reply.

### Aggressive Noise Reduction

I wish there was some way to switch off (or at least reduce) NR because while low light shooting with the Z3 and the Z3 Compact is quite delightful, you end up with needlessly soft images.

### Our Verdict

The phones have some fantastic features, great filters and quite good image quality.

But there are certain issues that Sony needs to iron out, especially if it is going to continue to target photographers. Agreed that overheating is a tradeoff for waterproofing, but it is about time Sony figured out a fix. Both the Xperias are well-intentioned cameraphones, but need more work. 📷

🔴 The B&W filter of the native photo editing app of the Z3 Compact allows you a considerable degree of control over the tonal range.

### THE Z3 AT A GLANCE

<b>SPECIFICATIONS</b>	20.7MP, Android 4.4 Kitkat, Snapdragon 2.5 GHz Qualcomm Quad-core, 3100mAh battery, Waterproof and dust tight (IP65 and IP68), Rs. 51,990
<b>WHAT WE LIKE</b>	Low light capability, Timeshift Burst video, 4k video
<b>WHAT WE DISLIKE</b>	The plastic flaps that cover the ports are likely to wear out easily
<b>WHY BUY IT?</b>	It is the only waterproof flagship in the market, with a screen large and bright enough for intensive image editing, or just plain admiring

### FINAL RATINGS FOR THE Z3

84%

<b>CAMERA FEATURES</b>	Fast f/2.2 25mm lens, 1/2.3-inch sensor, ISO control	14/15
<b>IMAGE QUALITY</b>	Quite pleasing, but lowlight performance spoiled by NR	30/35
<b>VIDEO QUALITY</b>	Realtime HDR in video, ability to edit movies with a native app	17/20
<b>HANDLING</b>	Homescreen shortcut to camera app doesn't launch immediately	13/15
<b>SPEED &amp; RESPONSIVENESS</b>	Sluggish AF, can't batch process due to overheating	10/15

### THE Z3 COMPACT AT A GLANCE

<b>SPECIFICATIONS</b>	20.7MP, Android 4.4 Kitkat, Snapdragon 2.5 GHz Qualcomm Quad-core, 2600mAh battery, Waterproof and dust tight (IP65 and IP68), Rs. 44,990
<b>WHAT WE LIKE</b>	Small form factor, 60% of the battery can be charged in less than 30mins
<b>WHAT WE DISLIKE</b>	The lack of a Full HD screen, despite the price
<b>WHY BUY IT?</b>	The Z3's camera module and waterproofing in a 4.6-inch body make this smartphone a compact powerhouse

### FINAL RATINGS FOR THE Z3 COMPACT

82%

<b>CAMERA FEATURES</b>	Image stabilisation, dedicated camera button	13/15
<b>IMAGE QUALITY</b>	Pretty high dynamic range, flare is quite well controlled	30/35
<b>VIDEO QUALITY</b>	SteadyShot for smooth transitions, 720p at 120fps	17/20
<b>HANDLING</b>	Ability to lock the touchscreen for underwater use	12/15
<b>SPEED &amp; RESPONSIVENESS</b>	Fast enough to handle single 20.7MP files without lag	10/15



All photographs by Aditya Nair



Amit Mehra

# Street Photography Then & Now



Amit Mehra

Since the last few years, I believe we have been slowly seeing the fading away of the genre of street photography. It's tragic, I think, as the street has been the training ground of almost every documentary photographer of repute.

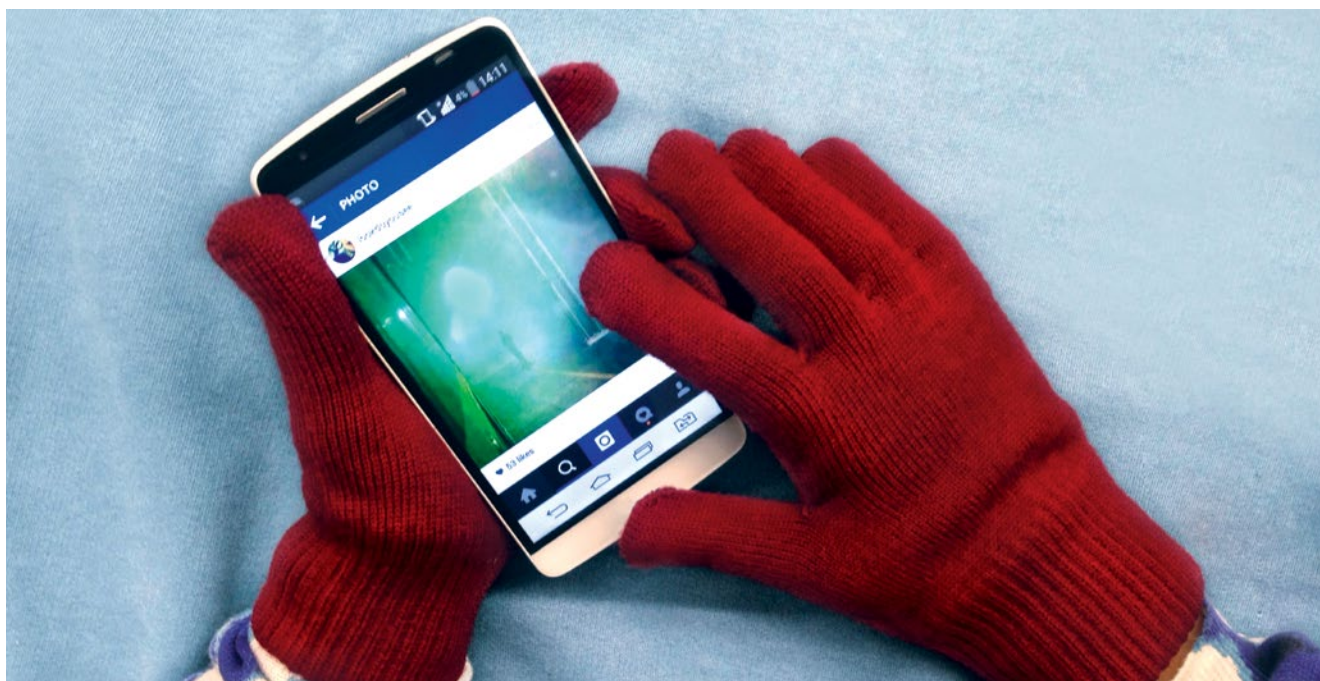
I like street photography because it encapsulates so many genres within itself. It may tell you about a place, make a social comment or even be an exercise in design. Instead of a prolonged engagement with one subject where one's mind starts controlling one's vision, on the streets, you can respond instinctively. No preconceived notions... photography for the sheer joy of it.

It's got a lot to do with the fact that editorial and publishing in India have suffered. I remember the *Monday Diary* column that the legendary S Paul did in *The Indian Express* in the 70s and 80s... one great street photo printed large. We would wait for it every week. Sadly that respect within newspapers seems to have vanished. The internet, as a viewing medium, almost forces us to consume multiple images together. Maybe one should create alternate viewing spaces, online.

Modern-day small cameras, and now phones, are great for street work. It is tempting to dream of a resurgence. But for that, a change in our mindset is necessary. ■

*Constantly trying to walk on a tightrope between commercial and documentary photography, Amit describes himself saying, "I'm like an octopus who likes to deal with different things at the same time. You can call me a schizophrenic photographer?" The moments in this monthly diary are excerpts from his ongoing work titled 'Roznaama'.*





Conchita Fernandes

Don't forget to go to the screen options menu and increase the sensitivity of your touchscreen.

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# An Electric Touch

Natasha Desai shows you how to make your woollen gloves conductive enough to touch your cellphone screen, in the cold.

**T**hink of this, there is a sharp chill in the air, and as you adjust your jacket and go deeper into it, you see the perfect snowy scene in front of you. You reach for your cellphone, hurrying as much as you can.

But the fleeting moment in front of you passes. And why so? Because your wool clad warm hands could not touch your screen in the cold.

## Why This Happens

Many touchscreens have what is known as a capacitive touchscreen. If any conductor of electricity comes near the screen, it will be sense it. Since skin is a good conductor, we are able to 'touch' these screens. Gloves on the other hand, are not so good.

But never fear, a solution is here—all you need is a functional knowledge of stitching, your old gloves and metallic thread. **BP**

## How to Turn Your Regular Woollen Gloves Into Heat Conducting Ones!



### The Materials You Need

Gloves. You will need a needle and metallic thread, which is available for Rs. 10 in craft shops. This thread is not hard as wire and will not scratch your screen.



### A Stitch in Time

Turn your gloves inside out and make little stitches at the finger tips. You could make them on as many fingers as you like, such as your thumb as well.



### ...Et Voila!

There you have it! You will now be able to use your gloves to operate the screen to shoot, edit, post images as you wish.

All photographs by Natasha Desai



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# A Photographer's Guide

Instagram isn't just an easy-to-use photosharing social network, it also happens to be the fastest to being able to showcase your photos to millions of people, the app is filled with potential isn't a story about getting millions of followers overnight, rather about getting found by the

## Build Up Your Instagram Handle

Before you start publicising your Instagram handle add at least 15 great images that represent your work. This gives people an idea of your work and a reason to follow you.

## Who You Are Makes a Difference

A catchy handle and a descriptive bio about who you are and what you shoot will go a long way in distinguishing you from the hoards of spam bots out there. Choose a profile picture that is welcoming and easy to understand in a small size.

## Leverage Your Existing Networks

Connect your Insta account to Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and share your images here.

If you have business cards, have a link to your account so that potential clients can connect and see your work here as well.

## Don't Be a Ghost

The most annoying kind of Instagram users are the ones that go around following everyone in a hope to boost their own follower count. Instead, follow people whose work you enjoy and engage with them about their photographs. Have a look at the people they follow as it will help you discover even more great photographs.

## #Dont #Be #That #Guy #Either

Hashtags are useful but add them within reason. Stick to relevant hashtags. If you are use apps like VSCOCam, or a particular brand of cellphone or camera, mention them in your tags. Certain brands pick up these images and share them with their followers.

## Geotag Your Pictures

Tag the images to the places where you make them. This serves two purposes. Firstly, your photographs act as a document for others to see. And secondly, it is always fun to go to the Map feature of Instagram and go through all the places you have visited when you want to reminisce.

## Be a Part of the Community

There are plenty of collaborations that happen on and as a result of Instagram. For example, since the @EverydayAfrica and @EverydayAsia handles gained popularity, it has spawned many local replicas like @EverydayMumbai. Try getting your work featured by such handles. Additionally, Instagram themselves run Weekend Hashtag Projects each that you can participate in to get featured on their account.

## Join Insta Walks in Your City

Groups of Instagrammers getting together and going on photowalks are now a common sight in almost every city. There is no better place to network, share ideas and talk about photography. If there isn't one in your city, start one!

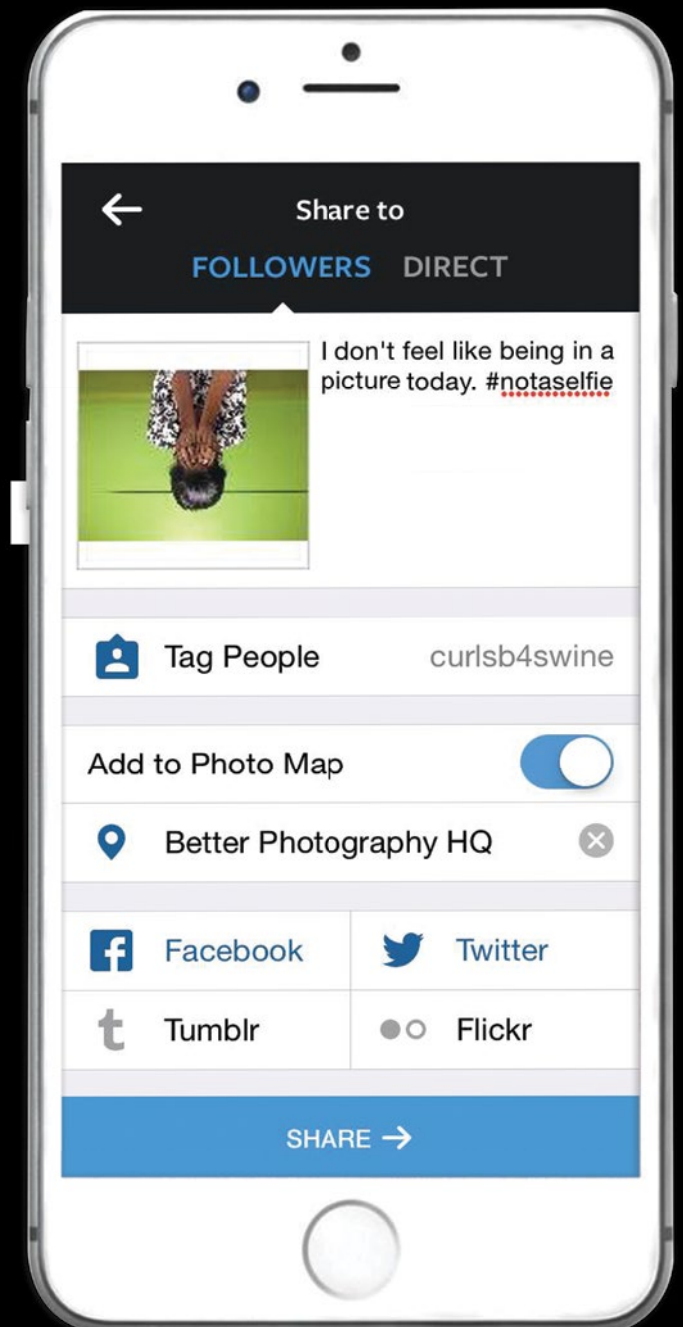
## Try Being a Guest Instagrammer

Take over another account for a week or two and post your images there.

This could be an account of a magazine, group or even trade accounts with a fellow photographer. It exposes you to a whole new and interesting audience. One of the best examples of such a collaboration in India was by @Scroll\_In, where photographers across the country documented the Indian elections.

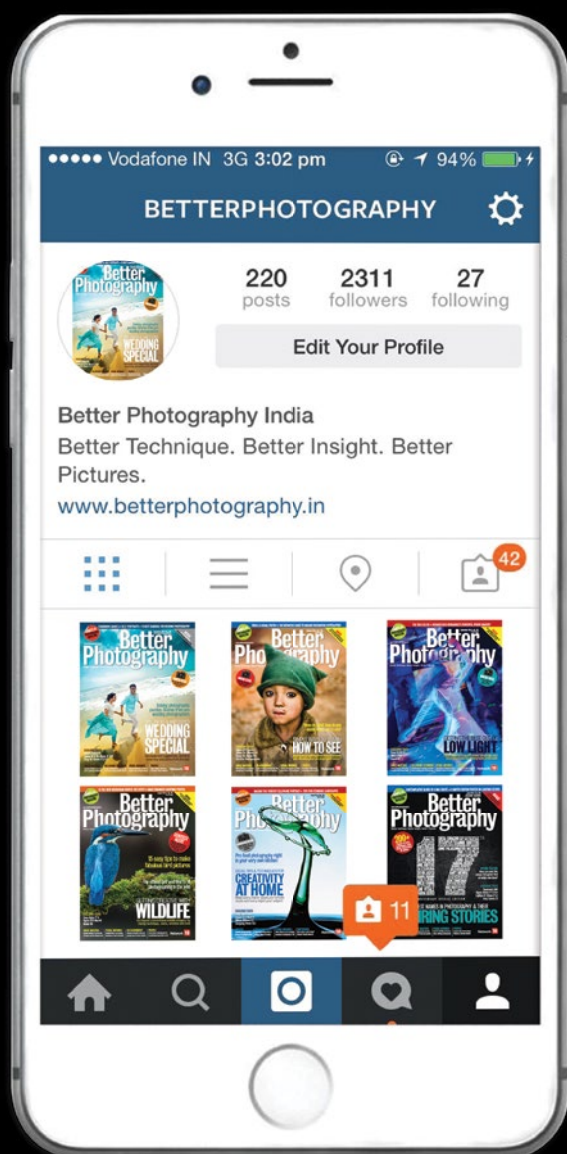
## Monitor Your Statistics

Sites like IconoSquare (formerly Statigram) and Totem (Nitrogram) give you analytics for Instagram like number of followers, unfollows, comments and likes to help you understand your followers and what they are interested in.



# To Becoming #InstaFamous

growing medium for self publication that has ever existed for photographers. In addition, editors, clients, art lovers and collaborators whom you can engage and work with. Ultimately, this right people who appreciate the images you make. Aditya Nair shows you how.



## Be Known For a Style

As you start building your followers, people will start associating you with a certain kind of imagery and quality. We all love to experiment but new Instagrammers are more likely to follow you if they see a profile filled with great photographs. So, be picky about what you choose to share. Above all, avoid clichés. Sunsets may get you immediate likes but they will severely limit your audience.



Natasha Desai (@curist4swine)

## Creative Use of Apps

Nothing wows a photography audience like seeing something unique. There are a number of apps available that help you conceptualise weird and unique ideas—from editing (Snapseed), filters (VSCO), B&W tones (Hueless), collages (Photo Grid) to more interesting prospects like animated 3D graphics (Matter), multiple exposures and layer blending (Union) and psychedelic effects (Glitché). Even adding music or augmented virtual reality in an everyday setting can result in some fun photo-video projects to enthrall your audience.

## Most Importantly, Be Aspirational

People visit Instagram to see stunning imagery and read interesting stories behind them. There is a reason that travel, food, pets and kids are popular topics. Positivity works wonders on Instagram. Even if it is your objective to bring to light social issues, avoid lamenting or ranting about them. Instead point your followers towards NGOs or groups working to fix the problem, through your captions.

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## Partner Up With Popular Blogs

Ask them if they would like to feature your stories and photographs. Most blogs will jump to the chance as it means free content for them. Ask them to embed the Instagram images they use. Or, at the very least link to your profile.

## The Best Time to Upload Photographs

Figure out when your followers are most active. Do they check Instagram as soon as they wake up? Or prefer to end their day looking at beautiful imagery, before going to bed? Give them something to appreciate... an interesting story.

## Don't Become the King of Spam

Post regularly but don't spam people's feed. Avoid posting more than three images at a stretch. Conversely, avoid going off the grid too often. If you feel the need to share a lot of images in one go, try using apps like @Flipagram or HTC's Zoe to create slideshows.

## Experiment With Video

Can you tell a great story in a few seconds? Or show off the breathtaking scenery of the place you are travelling to? Or even capture a funny moment? Then you may want to mix your photography up with some entertaining 15-second video snippets too.

## Get Personal

Your style may define you as a photographer but also throw in a few images that help humanise you. Photos of friends, family, your workplace, funny things that your pets do are all good fodder to feed the insta-hungry.

## Stay Current

Choose subjects that are current in people's minds. Before a festival, photograph the making of idol. During the IPL, try making pictures at the stadium highlighting the team you support. You can use websites like Webstagram (websta.me) to get an idea of popular hashtags.

## Let Instagram Evolve Your Style

It is always fun to scroll down to the very first of thousands of images posted by Instagram pros and see how their styles morphed over the years. You can see when certain trends, hashtag projects and apps became popular, even how short or long-lived their popularity was.





### Sarah Marie Waiswa

- She was born in Uganda, but grew up in Kenya. She currently lives in Nairobi and works in the field of hospitality.
- She admires the work of Delphine Diallo, a French-Senegalese photographer; the Equatorial Guinean artist Quazimoto, the Cameroonian photographer Samuel Fosso, and the Malian photographer Seydou Keita.
- She runs a blog called True African Original where she not only presents interviews with African photographers, but also curates plenty of interesting work from all sorts of media.

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➔ Sarah brings out hitherto unseen aspects of Nairobi, such as this glassworks factory that makes products from recycled glass.



# Phoet Extraordinaire

Sarah Marie Waiswa combines the words 'photo' and 'poet' into a new word, while describing her aesthetic to Ambarin Afsar.

When I think about Kenya, what comes to mind is the lush landscapes, the vibrant wildlife and the gentle Maasai Mara.

But there is so much more to a country and its people than a few single stories that the world knows, or thinks it knows. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a Nigerian author, in her TED talk, speaks about the danger of a single story. "It is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about power. There is a word, an Igbo word

that I think about whenever I think about the power structures of the world, and it is *nkali*. It's a noun that loosely translates to "to be greater than another." Like our economic and political worlds, stories too are defined by the principle of *nkali*. How they are told, who tells them, when they're told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power."

Adichie goes on to say, "Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person. The Palestinian poet

### FIND SARAH HERE!

- Instagram: @lafrohemien
- Blog: [www.trueafricanoriginal.com](http://www.trueafricanoriginal.com)
- Twitter: @lafrohemien



**"I am drawn to people who are not afraid to express themselves, no matter how odd or imperfect others may perceive them to be."**

Mourid Barghouti writes that if you want to dispossess a people, the simplest way to do it is to tell their story and to start with, "secondly." Start the story with the arrows of the Native Americans, and not with the arrival of the British, and you have an entirely different story. Start the story with the failure of the African state, and not with the colonial creation of the African state, and you have an entirely different story."

### **Coming Across a Unique Storyteller**

I usually have these thoughts in my mind every time I view the work from one particular region of the world. I try to make it universal, I try to see what is not inside the four lines of the photo frame, ▶



Sometimes, she is amazed by how well cellphone pictures turn out. She says it goes to show that photography is really not about the equipment.



➡ Sarah says that it is important for her to tell a diverse story about where she lives, a story as diverse as the landscape.





She enjoys bringing out the quirks of the people she makes portraits of.

and I try to hear what the photo is saying. This is why when Instagram featured Sarah Marie Waiswa, I was really excited. It was refreshing to see her diverse portraits of an urban Nairobi, which is also very rooted in ethnicity. She says, "I had lived in the United States for over 10 years, so when I came back to Africa, I was so excited to be



Sarah prefers the spontaneity of candid moments, rather than posed ones.

home, I wanted to document everything. For me, it was a way to portray the richness of culture and colour that I had missed so dearly—a way for me to rediscover home."

### What Moves People

On what drew her to portraiture, she says, "I'm a student of psychology, I have

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### SQUARING IMAGES

You must have observed that Instagram also houses images that retain their original aspect ratio. If there is an image that is not working out as a square, and you feel that important elements are being cropped out, you can use an app to add white borders in order to make the image fit into Instagram's native square format.



She tries incorporating lines in different ways, which often results in very graphical images.





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### How to Tell Different Stories About Your Place of Interest

- **Don't Take Anything for Granted:** Be more attentive to your surroundings. Colours, sounds, smells, textures... use them all to be more appreciative of life.
- **Just Do It:** If you want to make a photograph, just go ahead and do it. Don't worry about who is watching you on the street, and don't feel awkward.
- **Keep Shooting:** No story is too small to be told, be it that of your friends, your neighbours or the people you meet on your local commute.

always been fascinated by people, how they think, what moves them, what makes them different and so on. “

### Many Parts of a Whole

Most of the portraits that Sarah makes include people from different

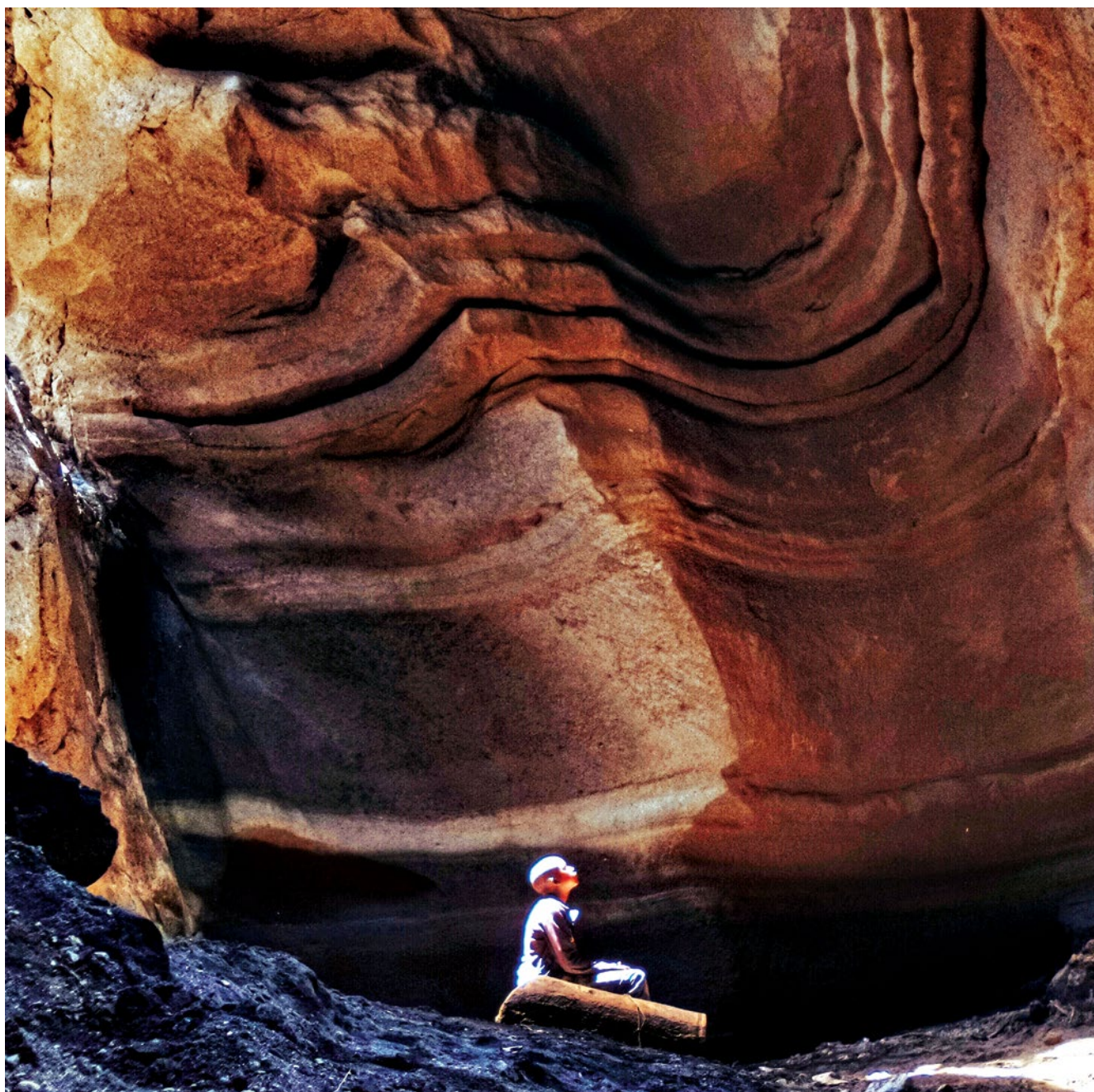
backgrounds, and different strata of the city. So, it made me curious whether these people were known to her, or whether these were strangers she comes across. “I photograph friends and family occasionally, but mostly, I photograph strangers. I am drawn to people who are not afraid to express themselves, no matter how odd or imperfect others may perceive them to be. However, I am also drawn to people who have a strong visual story”

### The Urban Landscape

Her portraits show colourful facades, graffiti-covered walls, narrow alleys, tiled ▶

➔ She loves playing with shadow and light. Her images really bring out the wonderful nature of light that Kenya receives.





rooftops, moss-laden stairways, pristine beaches and of course, the sun-kissed landscape of Kenya.

"I like to choose locations that say something about the city, which have as much character as the city. To understand anything, you need to have as much information as possible. In this way, I try to show as many parts as I can, in the hope that people will understand and appreciate the images in a much more informed manner. I like creating images that make people think, or make them say, I want to go to that place, or I want to meet that person."

And she does this quite successfully. Very often, I find myself wondering

who these people are and what their stories are like. Recently, she has started providing additional information in the form of short essays, but for the rest, it is good to wonder.

### The Compositional Advantage of Cellphones

She uses a Nikon D7100 and a Samsung Galaxy S4 Zoom, and believes that one good thing about making portraits with a cellphone is the fact that it makes exposure setting decisions for you.


"You are more likely to think about composition since you are shooting at a fixed aperture with some control over ISO and shutter speeds. You're focusing less

She enjoys creating images that make the viewer double guess. "If there is a sense of mystery in them, then I am happy."



**“I try to show as many parts as I can, in the hope that people will understand and appreciate the images in a much more informed manner.”**

on the dials and more on the person and the moment. There is less pressure while trying to perfect a shot. Also, image editing apps make your workflow so much easier. Of course, the tradeoff is shooting in RAW.”

Sarah wants to continue telling stories, and wants to do photojournalism. She also wants to narrate what is happening in the world. What I learnt from seeing her work is that Kenya can look various types of beautiful, and that her people are every bit as sunkissed and glorious as her. What Sarah's pictures also tell us is the manner in which you choose to tell stories can give dignity to people, and can show the brightness, hope, grace and happiness that lives within each one of us. 



Sarah's portraits have a sense of wonder and innocence, as in this image of a boy and a jacaranda tree.



She has a knack for making faceless portraits that are beautiful and surreal, such as this image of a bride.

#### INSTA FOLLOW NOW

One very interesting account to follow is [@thecountrywithoutapostoffice](#). It is an account that features documentary and archival photographs of everyday life in the Kashmir Valley. The handle has been inspired by a poem of the same name by the famous Kashmiri poet, Agha Shahid Ali.



# READERS' GALLERY

Better Cellphone Photography's readers took to making photographs of the beautiful sun for this month's theme 'Sunsets'.



**Winner**

## Passing Through

Abhijit Chendvankar, Mumbai

### What made me shoot this:

While I was waiting for the sun to set, I decided to play with my phone's White Balance and accidentally chose the wrong setting. At the same time, a cart appeared and I immediately took to photographing the scene. What I was left with was an image with beautiful tones of purple.

**What I learnt:** One should not refrain from experimenting with the different settings on their phone. I am glad that I chose the incorrect WB settings. This gave my image a unique effect.

**Shot with:** Samsung Galaxy S3

## Venturing into the Unknown

Pranav Singh, New Delhi

### What made me shoot this:

I shot this image at the Maya Bay at the Phi Phi islands in Thailand. I was captivated by the silhouetted boats against the dreamy orange blue sky.

### What I learnt:

Photography is not always about making daring or challenging pictures. Sometimes even the most effortless images, made while relaxing, turn out to be the most beautiful and memorable ones.

**Shot with:** Samsung Galaxy S4



**Honourable Mention**

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➡ **Inverted View**  
Chetan Bharambe,  
Hyderabad

**What made me shoot this:**  
I wanted to create the illusion of the fish flying.

**What I learnt:** I discovered that with the help of objects around the house and a little bit of imagination, one can create creative-looking photographs.

**Shot with:** Samsung Galaxy Grand Duos



**Honourable Mention**

➡ **Looking Beyond the Horizon**  
Mukul Soman, Seattle

**What made me shoot this:**  
To convey the idea of the surfer's love for the ocean, I composed the picture in a way where the light and shadows leads the viewer to the subject.

**What I learnt:** Most of us take simple everyday things like sunsets, for granted. After this, I know that I am going to shoot the subject a lot more.

**Shot with:** Apple iPhone 5



**Honourable Mention**



# Better Pictures

1

## Filters To Control the Sky

In situations where exposing for the foreground will end up in blown out skies, such as while shooting valleys filled with snow or mist, a graduated Neutral Density filter can help you ensure an evenly exposed sky. Polarisers are great for taking the glare off of snow or other reflective surfaces like lakes, and can help make colours appear saturated.

3

## Wait for the Blue Hour

The period before sunrise and after sunset when the sun is at a significant distance below the horizon, causing the skies to look blue, is called the blue hour or twilight. This time of the day can give you a beautiful sky to play with, besides dynamic winter elements. Here, the blueness of the mountains is caused by the scattering of light.

2

## Take a Look Closer Home

The easiest way to capture the essence of winter even if you live in a city is to find a vantage point such as a hill, mountain or even an extremely tall building that rises above low-settling fog. Such wintry phenomena are best photographed from without.

# 25 Tips for Amazing Winter Landscapes

When you think of winter, what comes to your mind? Snow-covered vistas, softly rising mist, and fog-filled valleys. Ambarin Afsar takes you through tips that will help you freeze these ephemeral landscapes forever.



ON ASSIGNMENT

**Snow Encounters**  
Graphical B&W images  
from North India

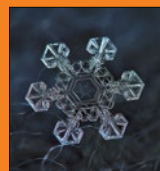
86



ON ASSIGNMENT

**Ice Diamonds**  
Macro photographs of  
perfect snowflakes

90



TIPS AND TRICKS

Find out how to shoot  
cloudscapes, jump  
portraits and puddles

94



4

**Overexpose for Whiteness**

Be it fog, mist or snow, your camera's meter is bound to get fooled. The rule of thumb is to overexpose so that you do not end up with flat, grey images. This could range anywhere between a third of a stop to one or even two stops. Overexposing also depends on whether there are other colours or elements in the scene and how you want them to turn out.

5

**Carry a Tripod**

Mist and fog do not allow a lot of sunlight to pass through, which will mean increased exposure times, especially with narrow apertures. Besides, twilight is not particularly bright in winter. So, carry a tripod to ensure not just steady shots, but straight horizon lines.

6

**Look for Patterns and Shapes**

Is there a bank of snow creating an undulating slope? Or is the mist swirling about the trees in a particular pattern? Is there a curving pathway that is shrouded by fog? Look for shapes, forms and leading lines in the landscape, and isolate them for powerful, minimalist compositions.

7

**Carry Spare Batteries**

The colder it gets, the shorter your battery life will be. Always carry spares, keep them fully charged and also keep them in a pocket close to your skin, your body warmth will prolong their life. Swap out batteries before they die, returning the used one to your pocket, this will extend its life further.

Mountains often have clouds blowing over them, which can cause foggy conditions even in the middle of a sunny day.

Gurdeep Dua



## 8 Don't Let the Meter Fool You

Winter scenes often have a tremendous dynamic range, exceeding the capabilities of your camera. Expose for the highlights, and read the histogram to see if they are getting clipped. You may have to allow for a loss of a certain amount of highlight detail, since mist and snow are supposed to be white, and there's only so much detail you can retain while making the landscape appear bright.

## 9 Seek Out Colour

Winter landscapes can be largely monochromatic, which gets tedious after a while. So, look for rock formations, foliage, signboards, and vehicles. On the other hand, look for the play of light and shadow. Dappled light across the landscape or patches of warm sunlight can add a beautiful dash of colour.

## 10 Grey Cards for Tricky Situations

For your camera, a well-balanced exposure means getting 18% greys. The colour of snow, fog and mist is white. So you either compensate for exposure based on what your eyes are seeing, or you use a grey card to measure accurate exposure settings. A grey card will also allow you to set Custom White Balance and do away with unwanted casts.

## 11 Colder the Air, Better the Colour

If there isn't any cloud or fog cover, sunrise and sunsets are the coldest parts of the day, and hence the clearest. You are less likely to find haze at such times, and colours are more likely to pop. Also, the higher you go, the clearer the air, the crisper the colours.



**12 Use WB to Warm Up or Cool Down**

Blue tones convey coldness, while orange or yellow tones convey warmth. Using the wrong White Balance preset can completely alter your winter landscape. Bluish hues of snow or fog can emphasise how cold the region is, while warm hues can further enhance the magic of the golden hour.

**13 Take Note of the Sun's Position**

During winters, the sun is much lower on the horizon. This simply means that the Golden hours, the time before and after sunrise and sunset, will become much longer. Also, during afternoons, the low angle of the sun creates light that brings out the texture of the landscape. You can even track the position of the sun using simple cellphone apps.

**14 Shoot in RAW, Bracket the Exposure**

Ultimately, this is one of your best bets as you be able to see what the same scene looks like across the exposure range. Additionally, you will also have a set of shots to play with, should you decide to make High Dynamic Range images. RAW files will also give you a great degree of control over dynamic range.

**15 Underexpose for Mood**

This may sound odd to you, but underexposure can help you make the scene more ominous and dramatic. However, you have to pay attention to the direction of light in order to estimate how much to underexpose, so that you do not simply end up with featurelessly dark images.

**16 Look for Details**

Observe how the fog hugs the ground or the mist floats from place to place, as if it has a life of its own. Look for fallen leaves blanketing the ground or rows of barren trees. Figure out if there is a pond or a water body that has frozen over, or that tends to be covered by mist or fog.

Valleys are more likely to fill with fog than plains. Lakes and other bodies of water can sometimes have a shallow mist form over their surface in the evening.

Ashish Sharma



**17 Check Weather Reports**

Cold weather isn't only limited to fogs, mists and snowfall. You can have unexpected storms, hail or even rain showing up when you least expect it. Look up forecasts to determine whether there is a storm headed your way. Some of the best photo opportunities can occur just before or after a storm breaks!

**18 Varying Shutterspeeds**

Generally, the shutter speed needs to be a second or less in order to prevent the fog or mist's texture from smoothing out. But, you might not be able to get away with this if the fog is moving slowly or if the light levels are too low. On the other hand, you can convert a blizzard into streaks with a slow shutter speed.

**19 Use the Rule of Thirds**

Foggy and misty conditions are actually one of the best times to practise the Rule of Thirds. The landscape is largely monochromatic and you can pay careful attention to composition. Also, in extremely backlit situations like this, using the Rule can help you make striking compositions.

**20 Think Ahead**

Consider various vantage points to shoot the same scene, and be prepared for unexpected situations such as this one of a landslide. Thinking ahead will also help you avoid situations like leaving your footprints in wet mud or snow if you plan to include that particular part of the scene in your frame.

**21 Manual Focus is Your Friend**

Foggy or misty conditions are likely to confuse the camera's autofocus and cause it to hunt. And so, as with any good landscape photograph, manual focus and hyperfocal distance are key to getting sharp details across the frame.

## 22 Not Just about Winter

Besides shooting desolate, empty landscapes, look for scenes that have humans or animals in them. Including such elements doesn't only convey a sense of place and scale, but also informs the viewer about the traditions and practices of that area. For instance, a coastal area will have boats and fishermen setting out early in the morning.

## 23 Look at How the Wind is Blowing

Clouds being swept away by the wind, plumes of mist or fog being thrown into a disarray by a strong breeze, or puffs of snow sent swirling in a tizzy are a few scenes that you are likely to witness if you pay attention to the direction of the wind. If the sky is gloomy and overcast, you might also be rewarded by a sudden break in the clouds.

## 24 Keep Yourself and Your Gear Safe

This is a bit of a no-brainer. Wear warm clothes, sturdy shoe, layer well enough and look for good, flexible gloves. Quite a few photographers recommend wearing skiing or ice-climbing gloves as they tend to be more dexterous. Don't wipe the condensation that forms on your lens and use a UV filter to protect the front lens element.

## 25 Employ Dramatic Backlighting

Fog acts as a natural soft box, it scatters light sources so that their light emanates from a much broader area. Sunlight that is located behind the subject, combined with fog can be quite dramatic. The low angle of the sun, combined with the moisture in the air, produces rich, saturated golden light.

Fog can emphasize the shape of subjects because it downplays their internal texture and contrast. Often, the subject can even be reduced to nothing more than a simple silhouette.

Gautham N N



# A Winter's Day

**Supriya Joshi** invites you to experience the winter chill by spending your time shooting subjects that make the season unique on the streets.

**T**owards the end of the year, temperatures drop, and the world becomes a magical place. The atmosphere visibly changes, people start layering their clothing and the light keeps varying throughout the day. Spend an entire day making photographs outdoors, and you will find various picturesque situations unfolding right before you.

## Start Early

As tempting as warm blankets are on a cold winter morning, you really need to start your day just before sunrise to make the most of the atmosphere. There is usually a thick fog cover or fine mist in the air, which will dominate your frame.

The other reason to get up early is to observe the people who start their day early too. You can photograph the people ▶



Dew drops condense in the morning and can make for very compelling subjects. Look for them in non-natural settings, like on plastic sheets and windowpanes.

Margot Singh





Raj Lalwani

going on walks, or on their way to work, bundled up in warm clothing.

### The Magic of Tea

You will find several street corners where a shopkeeper would be brewing a steaming kettle of tea, while people huddle around his stall, waiting for their cup. Strike up a conversation with them...

camaraderie increases when strangers are engaged in the same activity. As they get friendly and start sharing stories and jokes, you could make pictures of them.

The piping hot cup can be an interesting subject on its own—you could start a photo series documenting your daily cup of tea in various locations all over your city!

➡ The presence of fog can give your photographs a monochromatic feel. A lone human subject within this frame can break the monotony beautifully.

➡ While you wait for the roads to clear during landslides, take the opportunity to make environmental portraits. Not only will it convey a sense of space but also the people in relation to the space.



Naveen Krishnan

Don't stop shooting if your lens fogs up. It allows you to shoot dreamy and hazy portraits.

The rising sun dissipates the fog as well as adds a gradient to the sky. This could make for an enchanting frame when shooting nature.

Niraj Singh





Monica Tiwari

### Look for Congregations

Many people start small bonfires to warm their hands and feet... you could always join in and make pictures of the people with whom you are sharing the fire's heat!

### Celebrate Sartorial Choices

How about starting a street fashion photo series, focusing on people's clothing when

temperatures drop? You may find interesting people wrapped up in layers and layers of woollen clothing, such as a gentleman with a colourful earmuff or a lady draped in an intricate shawl.

### Employ Minimalism

Winter is often associated with silence, and to portray this, you could look

➡ Train your eye to look for the smaller moments. A single frame can convey the whole gamut of a season.

➡ People's clothing can convey the weather, even in a humorous manner. Keep the rest of the frame simple for more impact.



Raj Lalwani

## Three Unique Winter Photo Opportunities



Sayan Bhattacharya

### Hazy Architecture

The soft, billowing mist is the perfect offset to the rigid sturdiness of structures. It is especially effective when it comes to ruins.



K Madhavan Pillai

### Marvellous Snow

While only a few parts of the country experience this phenomenon, snow is the perfect blank canvas to frame your subjects with.



Harsh Pasricha

### Formidable Trees

As the sun is low on the ground during winter, the sunlight cuts through trees for beautiful and sometimes eerie effects.

**Document the changing weather by photographing foliage and its colour variations.**


for minimalist scenes. Fog and mist dominating your frame are the perfect backdrops for solitary elements... imagine a lone tree or an animal emerging from the fog.

### Afternoon Delight

The natural world also turns aglow during afternoons. You can walk down to the nearest park or open space and photograph the flowers or other greenery there. The colourful flowers bathed in yellow light can make for very beautiful subjects.

### The Rhythm of the Night

As the day progresses to night and the light recedes, a subject you can shoot, albeit with extreme caution, is cars. As they make their way towards you, their headlamps will cut through the fog, which can result in unique long exposures. However, make sure you are safe and secure before you start shooting, as the car driver may not be able to see you.

The kinds of photo opportunities that will present themselves during a winter's day are astounding... all you need are your warmest clothes and you're good to go! 

 **Experiment with warm White Balance settings to counter the moody blues of the winter season.**

85



Nirup Singh



### My Assignment

#### Description

To photograph areas covered with snow wherever I find them.

#### Duration

I have been photographing snowy landscapes since 2008.

#### Notes

I don't dwell too deep into what I want my photographs to look like. They need to engage me enough to want to make pictures of them.

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ON ASSIGNMENT

# Snow Encounters

Kamal Rana takes you through a beautiful journey via the serene snow-laden landscapes of Northern India.



**S**now is one of the most difficult subjects to shoot, especially if you are not too well versed with how your camera settings work. However, this has never stopped most of us from relentlessly photographing it. One of the reasons could be the dreamy quality that snow possesses.

### My Perspective

Like a lot of people, I have always been fascinated by the ability of snow to magically transform a luscious green piece of land into a place right out of *The Chronicles of Narnia* book. I was also quite lucky, in fact, to grow up in a town that saw plenty of snow, and I guess the enchantment began since then. ▶

⦿ There isn't really a particular time or day that I prefer shooting. It largely depends on my moods, visual sense, and opportunities that present itself as I walk around.





➡ I personally think that there is no such thing as the 'wrong' light when it comes to photographing snow. Even when I have shot in harsh light, it has resulted in some interesting photographs with beautiful patterns and shadows.

88

➡ One way in which I like to break the monotony of the image is by including shadows. They provide beautiful contrast against smooth snowy surfaces.

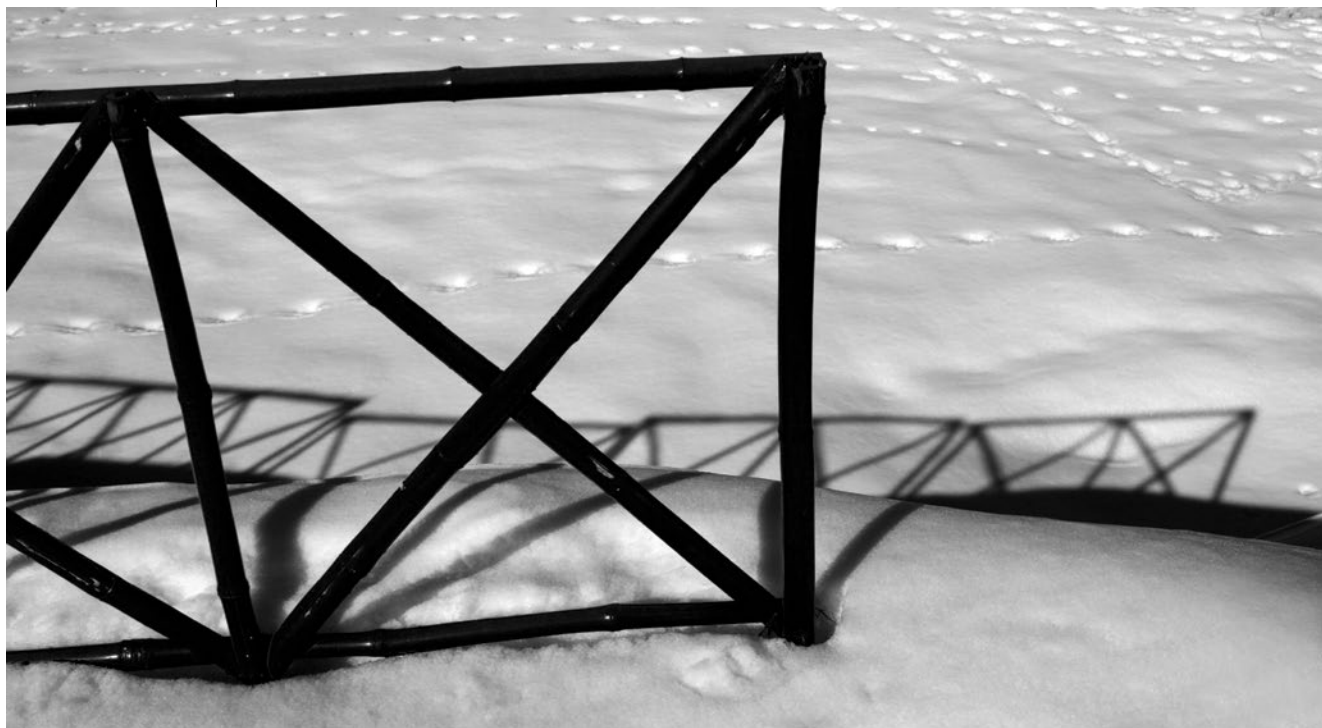
### The Process

Every year, I always make it a point to go back home to Joshimath in Uttarakhand, during the winters, and spend time skiing and photographing the area around me.

On their own, snowy landscapes can be very magnificent to look at, but they can also get monotonous. I overcome this by looking for elements like trees, fences and people.

### Tips on Using Your Gear in Cold Weather

- **Prolong Your Battery's Life:** To lengthen its usability, make sure that you turn off any unrequired features in your camera like the LCD screen and flash.
- **Beware of Condensation:** Place your camera in a plastic ziplock bag so that no external moisture gets inside it. Drop a few silica sachets as well, to ensure that any residual moisture inside the camera gets absorbed.
- **Carry a Rain Cover:** Snow and rainfall is inevitable in colder climates. So before you head out to shoot, ensure that you always carry a rain cover to protect your camera from the hazardous elements.





📌 I always shoot all my photographs in RAW, so that I don't lose out any minute details from the white snow.

In the beginning, it was a little difficult. The challenge was in getting the right exposure. I experimented with my camera's exposure compensation setting to achieve the right balance.

After shooting, I converted the images to black and white. Using Photoshop, I played with the levels and curves to get the desired tone and contrast.

The thing about such landscapes is that it is quite easy to be overwhelmed by large

snow-covered stretches. I suppose this is why a lot of photographers also choose to make grand landscapes of mountains and valleys. I, on the other hand, make an attempt to see and photograph the smaller and insignificant subjects that lend an ethereal quality to these landscapes. 📷

— As told to Conchita Fernandes

To view more images by Kamal, you can visit [www.kamalrana.com](http://www.kamalrana.com)

📍 Most of my photographs are shot at Auli, a popular skiing destination in Uttarakhand. Other places are Kashmir and Ladakh.

### My Equipment

For this series, I used the Canon EOS 6D and 7D cameras along with three different lenses—the Canon EF 24–105mm f/4L IS USM, the Tamron SP 24–70mm f/2.8 Di VC USD and the Tamron SP AF 70–200mm F/2.8 Di LD (IF).







90

🔧 When I first started the project, I converted a plastic bottle into a makeshift tripod to shoot vertical images of the snow crystals placed on the glass.

ON ASSIGNMENT

# Ice Diamonds

Alexey Kljatov loves to photograph snow in a way not usually seen by the naked eye. Here is a look at his delicate world of beautiful snow crystals.

Ever since I purchased my first digital camera, I became fascinated with macro photography. I did not think that it was possible to capture such tiny worlds using the Macro mode of a compact camera. Like most beginners, I immediately took to making photographs of flowers and ladybugs, until I accidentally discovered snowflakes.

## My Assignment

### Description

Making macro photographs of snow crystals

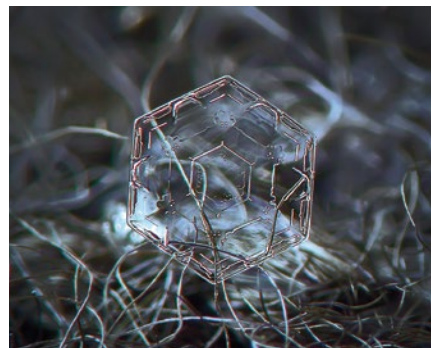
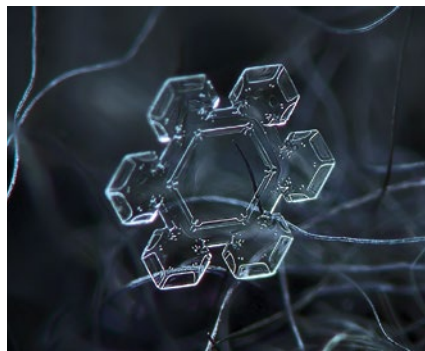
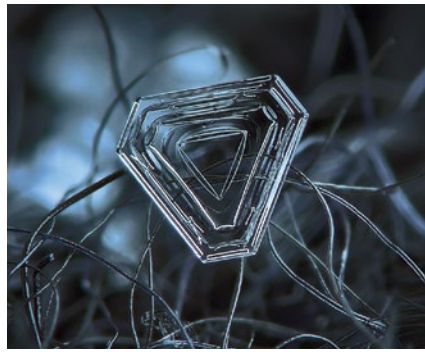
### Duration

I have been photographing snow crystals since 2008 and still actively continue to do so.

### Notes

Lately, I have also been documenting the melting process of the snow crystals, one picture at a time. Eventually, I want to create interesting GIFs using these photographs.

📍 I prefer shooting these photographs in my balcony because it is secluded from the rest of the house. This means that I can work in peace and I can quickly get inside the house if it gets too cold.







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📷 I shoot several identical photos of the same snow crystal. Later, I combine them to retrieve more detail and reduce noise in the overall image.

I was casually browsing through different websites when I came across images of beautifully photographed snow crystals. This was when I decided to begin my very own snowflake project.

### My Perspective

To be honest, I wasn't quite successful during my first few trials of shooting the tiny crystalline beauties. But even through these unsuccessful attempts,

### My Equipment

I used a Canon PowerShot A650 with a Helios 44M-5 58mm f/2 lens. I reverse mounted the lens onto the original lens of the A650. All of this was attached to a 30cm wooden board. In case I was photographing an overhead shot of the crystal on glass, I attached three extension rings to the lens. This helped in keeping the lens at an optimal focusing distance from the glass that held the crystals. For a step-by-step process of the setup, visit [betterphotography.in](http://betterphotography.in)

🔧 My photographs involve a good amount of postprocessing. This includes removing dust and ice debris. In the images with the woollen background, I try to add a blueish tinge to the sweater.



### Tips to Keep in Mind When Making Macros of Snow

- **Photograph at an Angle:** Making pictures of snow crystals at an angle will highlight surface reflections and prismatic colours. This occurs due to optical interference.
- **Be Patient:** This project will truly test your patience because it will take you some time to find crystals with different shapes and patterns.
- **Prevent Snow Crystals from Melting:** You need to make sure that you never breathe in the direction of the crystals. Additionally, ensuring that the surface is cold will further maximise the life of the crystal.

I could make out the shape and pattern of the snow crystals amidst all the noise and camera shake from my 12MP compact camera. This was encouraging. From then on, I went about experimenting with different setups and lighting conditions, until I figured out a simple macro setup. This helped me achieve a whole new level of precision in my photographs.

### The Process

My images may look complicated, but they are quite easy to create. One method that I use to shoot snow crystals is, placing an old woolen sweater on a stool and waiting for snow to fall on it. After this, I spot meter from where the snow crystal is located.

I also enjoy photographing backlit transparent crystals. I do this by placing a large slab of glass on the legs of an upside down stool. Then, I set the camera



over the area I want to shoot, at a timer of around 2–3 seconds, in order to avoid camera shake.

Whenever I shoot for this project, I end up making a lot of photographs. So, the editing process keeps me more or less occupied most of the times. However, I enjoy other kinds of photography like light painting and creating HDR photos of the beautiful night cityscape in Moscow, Russia, as well.

⚠ There is always a minimum distance of 1–3 cm between the lens attached to the camera and the snow crystal.

— **As told to Conchita Fernandes**

To view more images by Alexey, you can visit [www.chaoticmind75.blogspot.in](http://www.chaoticmind75.blogspot.in)

When I want to photograph the crystals on a glass surface, I illuminate it from behind using an LED light. This effect results in the candy-like background that you see.

⚠ There were a lot of trial and errors in the project, but I have learned from them. From shooting in dark corners of my house to the camera's shadow covering the crystal, I have done it all.





Want to share your ideas and tips? Write to  
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Bryan Katz

## DELIGHTFUL PUDDLES

### Surprises Lie Within

Puddles are quite unassuming and often overlooked. In fact, you are most likely to jump across them, than notice them. It is because of this mundane quality that you can make astonishing images that other people are likely to miss. Since puddles form in depressions in the ground, they hold still water, creating a perfect reflective surface.

The ripples interrupting the perfect scene look like something out of a dream.



Ajai Krishnan

Including the leaves in the water as an element, has made the image look like a layered painting.

Walk by a puddle a few times in different directions and you will be surprised at what you can see in them. This is especially true of cities where people, animals, buildings and so on can form interesting little scenes.

### Add to the Water

Make the humble puddle more interesting by adding things to it. Kick in a stone for some disturbance. Or touch your toe to get ripples. You could even pour some oil to get a pearly rainbow-like sheen, or use any other liquid that does not mix with water.

### Angles Change All

To make a small puddle seem like a vast expanse, you could move lower and angle your camera such that it almost touches the surface of the water. But, be careful not to drop it in! This angle usually magnifies the scene in the reflection. Another thing you could do, is shoot an image while standing with your camera pointed downwards.



# Better Photography

Our ever curious and passionate love affair with the camera will never cease. And so be it as Better Photography, India's first magazine completely devoted to the art and science of photography presents an expansive imagery like no other can. It is also the best-selling photography magazine in India and South Asia.

[www.betterphotography.in](http://www.betterphotography.in)

## Create an Illusion

You can shoot only the reflection, leaving out the actual scene. You can even include foreground such as the grass, road or a pathway to make the image look like it has layers. Rotate the image later, to make it look even more surreal.

Yet another way to trick your viewer is to juxtapose an object like a stone or a ball or even a shoe along with a puddle reflecting the sky.

## JUMP RIGHT UP

### On the Ready!

Make sure all your settings are in place before your subject jumps. You will need to pre-focus on your subject and release the shutter just at the perfect moment as they jump. To freeze the movement, you will need to use a fast shutter speed. For this, you may need to dial up the ISO depending on the light available to you.



The coarse, rippled reflection of the overhanging leaves, juxtaposed with the slender lines of the flowers is what makes the image interesting.

Chany Crystal

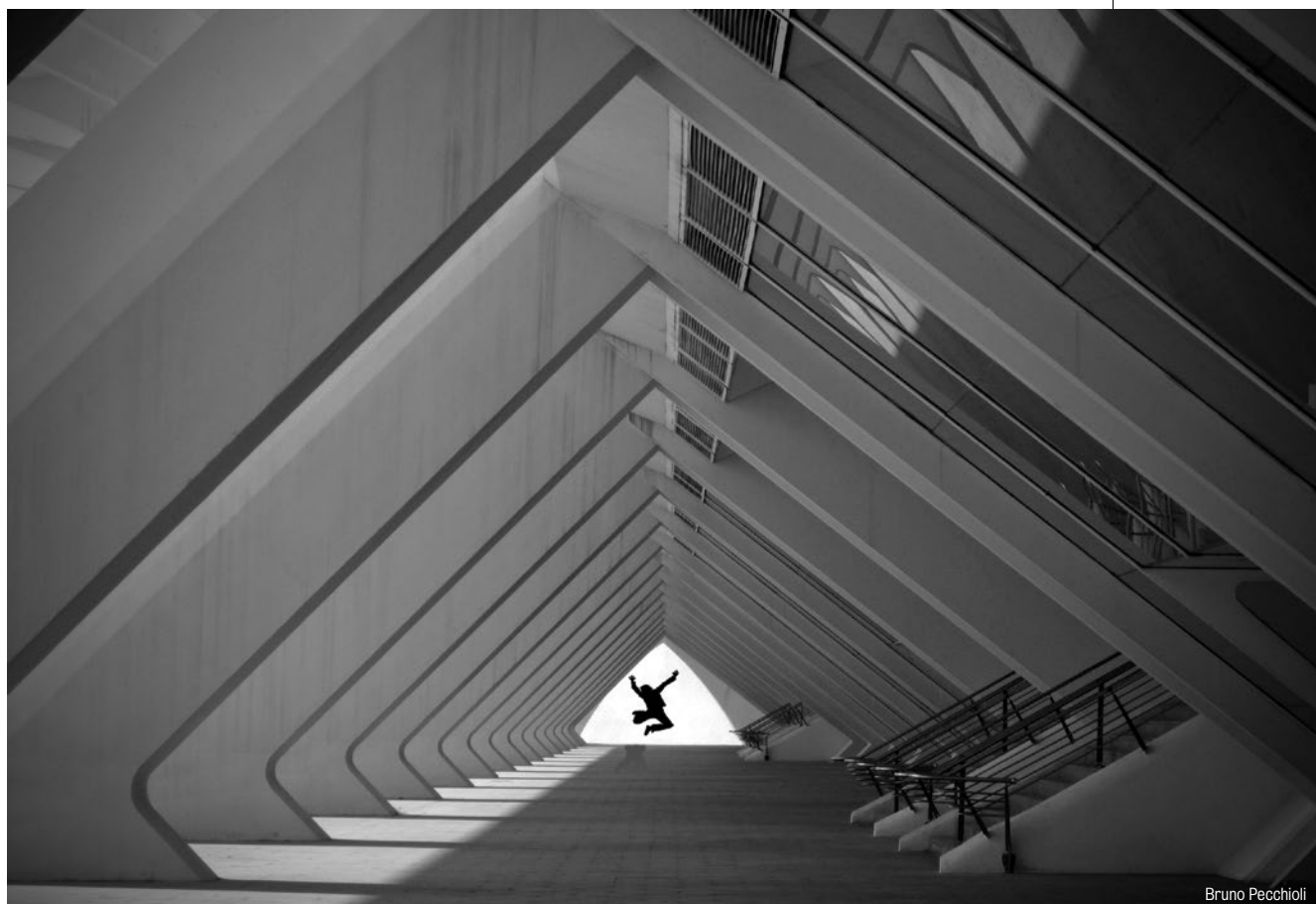
### QUICK TIP

When shooting a famous monument, use intentional camera shake for a creative twist.

### Location, Location, Location!

Shooting a jump portrait can be oodles of fun, but you have to get the location right! Try shooting at backgrounds of a stunning waterscape, a cliff or a rooftop with a magnificent view of a city.

➔ Even though the actual jump is far in the background, the lines leading up to the figure are what make the image truly fun.



Bruno Pecchioli



## Step Back

If you are going to be close to your subject, you may want to take a few steps back as people can jump very high.

On the other hand, if you want to shoot an exaggerated view of your subject, you can photograph them from a low angle as they lift off.

## CLOUDS THAT STUN

### Stop and Stare

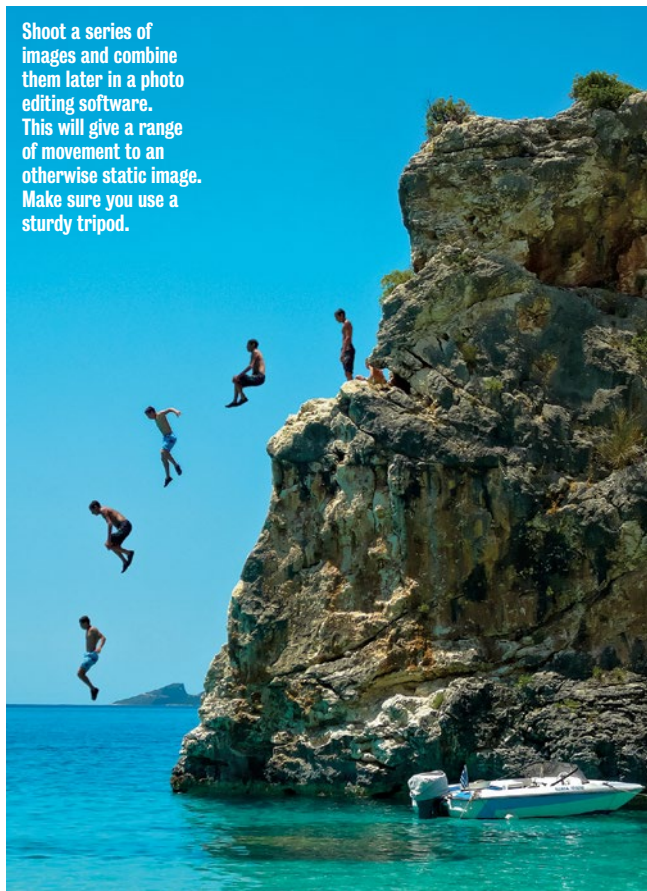
From looking like dramatic plumes of smoke to dreamy puffs of cotton candy, clouds make amazing subjects... that is, if you wait for them. Much like a child staring up and letting their imagination take over, you can lie down, stare at the sky and just wait for the magic to happen. Especially when caught in the right light, clouds like look like all kinds of funny things as the wind moves them. When you find the perfect formation, shoot away!

### QUICK TIP

To calculate depth of field download an app, like Simple DoF or Depth of Field Calculator. In these apps you have to enter the focal length of your lens, aperture and shutter speed to get the result.

📍 A high vantage point can give you an ethereal view of clouds. From a height, you can frame the clouds with other elements of nature.

Shoot a series of images and combine them later in a photo editing software. This will give a range of movement to an otherwise static image. Make sure you use a sturdy tripod.



Marjan Lazarevski



Barun Datta



Sarang Naik

### Note the Weather

Clouds are categorised into different formations that appear during different weather conditions. Cumulus clouds look like fluffy mountain peaks, while Cumulonimbus clouds resemble an explosion. On the other hand, the Stratus cover the entire sky like a blanket and Cirrus appear as thin wispy strips known as horse tails. Make sure it is the right time of the day for clouds or you may find yourself with a cloudless sky.

⚡ Clouds don't always have to be depicted in colour. Black and white tones can make the clouds look as fierce as plumes of smoke.

### Filters Can Help

When photographing a bright sky with clouds, and a darker foreground, use a graduated ND filter to even out the difference in exposure. Without the filter, you risk losing details in the foreground even as you try to get details in the sky.

As a camera's sensor is unable to deal with the high dynamic range of a scene like this, the graduated ND filter will darken and saturate the sky without irrevocably underexposing the foreground. **BP**

Participate in the 'Reader's Tip Contest' on [betterphotography.in/contests](http://betterphotography.in/contests) to win a chance to be featured in the magazine and win exciting prizes!

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### READER'S TIP

#### How to Pan With Ease

I made this image at the Annual Transgender Festival held in Kovaagam, Tamil Nadu. The subject in the photograph is a transgender person. I wanted to portray them as experiencing the same emotions as anybody else, since they are so marginalised by our society.

This panning image was made using a Nikon D5100 with a Sigma 10–20mm wide lens. I set the camera to a shutter speed of 1/40sec and set the aperture to f/10, as I shoot mostly in the manual mode. After this, I locked focus on my subject and as I pressed the shutter I moved the camera along with the merry-go-round. This is how I froze my subject while the background remained a blur.

To photograph a scene like this, you need to choose a vantage point where the subject is in clear focus and there is enough light on them. You will also need wide angle lens so that there is some room for the subject to move into the frame. I was shooting at the wide end of my lens to achieve the distortion you see in the image.

— Madhusudan Parthasarthy



Madhusudan Parthasarthy

Settle on a powerful composition before actually panning the camera.



# Q & A

Want your doubts cleared? Write to  
The Editor, Better Photography,  
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One Indiabulls Centre, Unit No 501, Fifth Floor,  
Tower 1, Jupiter Textile Mills, Senapati Bapat  
Marg, Elphinstone Road  
Mumbai-400 013, Maharashtra, India.  
E-mail: editor@betterphotography.in

## BRIEFLY

### When a lens has the numbers f/3.5-5.6 on it, what does it denote?

These numbers indicate the maximum apertures available in your lens across the zoom range. Basically, if your lens has f/3.5-f/5.6 written on it, this means that f/3.5, is the widest possible aperture provided by your lens at the wide end. Similarly, f/5.6 is going to be the widest possible aperture at the telephoto end.

## Camera Service

Should I clean the sensor of my DSLR by myself or should I get it done professionally? I bought the camera two years ago and have not serviced it since. Also, how often should one get the camera serviced?

**Avinash Ghorpade, Pune, via email**

There is an internal cleaning function in most DSLRs that use ultrasonic vibrations to shake dust off the sensor. It is enabled from the main menu. If you have stubborn dirt or dust on the sensor that does not go away using this dust cleaning function, we would strongly advise you to give it to an authorised service centre rather than try cleaning it yourself. The slightest mistake can permanently damage your camera.



➔ When using a cleaning kit to clean your camera, ensure that no instrument gets past the lens mount as this may damage the mechanism inside.

If you are a careful user of your camera and keep it clean, you really do not need to get the camera serviced unless you feel something is not working right. On the other hand, it makes sense to give the camera for a quick check up just before its warranty expires.

You can increase the functional life of your camera by keeping it clean and dust-free with a good cleaning kit. Use a blower to dislodge dust in the mirror well, without touching the nozzle of the blower onto the mirror or any part of the camera. Hold the camera body upside down when you do this, so that the dust moves out. Do this regularly to prevent heavy particles of dust from getting on the sensor.

## Portrait Session

I am a landscape photographer and soon I shall make posed portraits for the first time. Any tips on how to make my subject feel at ease during the shoot?

**Raqeeb Khan, Mumbai, via email**

Portraits are fun to shoot! The first thing you must do is relax. Make sure you are prepared in every way for the shoot, this will help you be sure of yourself. One simple way to do this is, to previsualise your photographs. Look up references and be sure to discuss them with your subject. In this way, your subject will be aware and prepared for the session as well. Be mindful of the poses you give them, and

## HOW TO

## Use the Content-Aware Move Tool in Adobe Photoshop CS 6 and Beyond

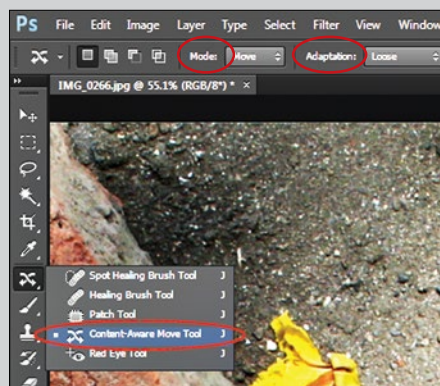
The Content-Aware Move tool is a means to select and remove a part of a picture. Photoshop automatically fills in what is left behind so that it matches the rest of the picture, hence the name 'content-aware'. The advantage of using this tool is that if you need to move a part of the image, you can do so without having to use extensive masking and multiple layers.

### Selecting the Parameter

Open the desired image, and select the Content-Aware Move tool. It is situated under the same tool sub-menu as the Spot Healing tool in Tool box. Then, select Move in the Mode menu located on the toolbar at the top. After this, choose an option from the Adaptation menu right next to the Mode menu. The options listed here decide how closely the filled in part will reflect the pattern of the surrounding image. If you choose Strict, it will be a direct copy which works when you have a tighter texture, but Loose works for images with a more relaxed pattern like the sky or the surface of a building.

### Select the Area

Once you have decided how tight or free you want the fill to be, use your pointer to draw around the part of the image that you want to move.



When you select the area you want to move, a dotted line appears around it after which you drag and place it where you want. In the image above, when the flower above is moved, the area left behind will be the mud.



## The Importance of a Release Form

I will be shooting quite a few weddings this season and I plan to use the images on my social media pages. Is it necessary for me to ask the couples to sign a release form in addition to a verbal agreement?

**Rohan Trivedi**, New Delhi, via email

Wedding photographs are extremely personal for couples, and they may not always be comfortable with the images being used online. Discuss this with your clients, and irrespective of a verbal agreement, ensure that you have a written agreement about the terms of usage.

One way of obtaining a written agreement is to insert a clause in your initial wedding photography contract, explaining the use of the images on your various social media pages.

On the other hand, some photography contests make the submission of a model release form a necessary part of the entry. In that case, you should ask your clients to sign a separate model release contract.



➔ People cherish their wedding pictures and it is always best to be transparent about the usage of their images.

### BRIEFLY

#### What is the difference between digital and optical zoom?

Always use the optical zoom of a camera. Switch off digital zoom. All it does is crop and interpolate the image, which means reduced image quality. Also, in a lot of cases, you can simply walk a few steps closer to your subject and eliminate the need for zooming in.



Make your subject laugh during the shoot to help them relax.

ensure that the poses flatter your subject's body type and features. Showing your subject some of the pictures you shoot helps put them at ease. Talk to them during the shoot. Soft music often helps create a relaxing environment. As you keep communicating, keep an eye for those unique expressions and capture them to make some great portraits.

#### Instagram, Hit or Miss?

I keep reading about Instagram and how much learning people get from it. Is it worth getting on to?

**Alok Kudva**, Hyderabad, via email

Instagram is one of the fastest growing communities and also houses some of the biggest names in photography as well. Over the course of its updates, Instagram has moved from just being an app about filters, to offering more serious control over your images. Through the hashtags, you can discover your favourite kind of photographs and different perspectives!

All the major publications in the world have a presence there. Journalists have been able to document high-tension and conflict areas through Instagram. Over the last couple of years, startling images from wars, natural disasters and other phenomena have made their way into people's feeds. It is truly an exciting medium!

#### Tripod Abroad

I have recently discovered that I enjoy shooting from high vantage points. However, I know that some international tourist locations do not allow the use of a tripod. Is there any way around this?

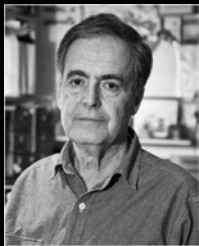
**Geethika Reddy**, Tirupathi, via email

Look up the rules regarding photography of the destinations you are planning to visit. If you can't use a tripod, use a railing or a wall as support along with the self-timer. Or use your bag. While this may not be as steady as a tripod, it is better than shooting handheld. You can also switch on in-body or lens image stabilisation, but do so only when shooting handheld.



➔ When abroad, enlist the help of a local person to help you find a non-tourist location that has no restrictions with regards to photography. Here, you should have no problem using a tripod!





Hermes Mareghetti

## Fausto Giaccone

- He enjoys listening to music while working at the computer or while scanning. He enjoys the music of Tom Waits and Bob Dylan as well as the Italian singer-songwriter Fabrizio De André. His tastes range from jazz to classical.
- Fausto is passionate about reading, and spends almost all his time buried in books. He likes reading Anita Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri among the Indian crop of writers.
- He is coming to India to be a part of Sensorium 2014 festival in Goa (5 December 2014 to 25 January 2015), and, while this is not his first visit, he hopes that it will inspire another series.

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South America/ Colombia/ Aracataca Department of Magdalena: Maria Grazia Daconte, the daughter of Antonio Daconte of Italian origin, who was also the founder of the Olympia Theatre in Gabo's hometown. In this photo, made in 2010, aged 91, she is tending to her birds on the patio of her home in San José square.

# A World of Mirrors

Ambarin Afsar spends a delightful time reliving Gabriel García Márquez's world with Fausto Giaccone, who has wandered through Gabo's creation and found it alive and thriving.

**M**acondo: An imaginary town dreamed up by Gabriel García Márquez for his novel, *100 Years of Solitude* (*Cien años de soledad*)—a town based on Gabriel's own birthplace of Aracataca, and his country, Colombia. The novel was published in 1967,

and found its way into the hands of a young Italian man serving his time in the military in a desk job. "I was depressed and bored of shuffling papers," says Fausto Giaccone, "my love for books is really a gift from the military. I was obliged to concentrate on the works of writers like Márquez."

**Swapan Parekh**

A defiantly individualistic voice

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**Sensorium 2014**

A peek into the upcoming photo festival in Goa

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A showcase of the best images sent by our readers

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**"I have never renounced the nostalgia of my homeland: Aracataca, to which I returned and discovered that between reality and nostalgia was the raw material for my work."**

**—Gabriel García Márquez**

This young man is now 71 years old and has visited Colombia many times since. He has also done something remarkable. He has taken one of the most complex novels, and in his own way, turned it into a photobook. "I was amazed when I first read *100 Years of Solitude*. I couldn't place the period of history, and I couldn't have pointed to the places mentioned in the story on a map. But I loved reading it very much."

**A Passion Spanning Nearly a Lifetime**

A 22-year-old Fausto, who was also studying architecture in Rome, started making pictures during his first hitchhiking trip through Europe in the early 60s. "It was an important decade for the world. I was inside the movement, and I was also outside, as a



watcher, as a photographer. This was when I understood that this would be my life, this would be my future. And after 40 years, I can tell you this, I wasn't wrong." ▶

◀ **South America/ Colombia/Aracataca**  
Department of Magdalena: Maria Magdalena Bolaño was born in 1917 in Villanueva Guajira, and went to Aracataca when she was eight, along with her mother to work in the home of Colonel Nicolás Márquez. Two years later, she became the nanny for the newborn Gabriel (fondly known as Gabo). In 2010, at the age of 94, she still had an enviable memory.



◀ **South America/ Colombia/Aracataca**  
Department of Magdalena: A quiet Sunday afternoon on the patio of a modest home. Fausto was wandering around in Aracataca one day, and he saw this family sitting together, involved in each other, and he simply entered the house and made a picture. What surprised him greatly was that the family went about their business, and took no notice of him.



📍 South America/  
Colombia/Department of  
Magdalena/Aracataca:  
A room in Gabriel's  
grandparents' house  
where he lived until  
he was eight years  
old. The photograph  
was made in 2006,  
before the house was  
turned into a museum.  
The portraits on the wall  
are of his mother, Luisa  
Santiago, as a young and  
old woman.



#### GADGETS & GEAR

- He wanted to leave everything he'd learned behind and so he decided to shoot in a new language, with a medium format Rolleiflex camera.
- For interior shots, he switched to a Mamiya 7 that gave him 6x7 prints.
- Gabo's novel is timeless, and Fausto wanted his photographs to have the same quality, and hence his choice of gear.

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📍 South America/  
Colombia/Valledupar  
Cesar department/  
Academia de Vallenato  
del Turco Gil:  
Vallenato music is  
very popular on the  
Colombian coast and was  
much loved by Gabriel  
García Márquez. On the  
wall is a portrait of the  
legendary blind musician  
Leandro Díaz.

#### Finding One's Own Mind

Fausto has done editorial, travel and photojournalistic work. "I've been able to live on photography all my life. But, in these last few years, I understood that this wasn't my real nature. I was really happy only when I was working on personal projects. This could happen perhaps four times in forty years, and only when I could make a book with my work. It is difficult to

understand your own nature. Maybe, you understand at the end... you understand why, perhaps, you had some difficulties while dealing with your work, with your life."

#### A Seed that Took Decades to Germinate

While Colombia is not unfamiliar territory for Fausto, he has been travelling to it since the 80s, it was only in 2006 that he realised he wanted to make a photobook. "But I did

📍 South America/  
Colombia/Cabo da Vela  
Department of La Guajira:  
This is a Wayúu  
Indian woman in the  
Guajiro sacred place.  
Gabriel's maternal  
grandmother, Tranquilina  
Iguarán, was of Wayúu  
origin, and played a  
fundamental part in his  
creative development  
during his childhood.





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**“I couldn’t tell you because even I don’t know who I am yet.”  
—Gabriel García Márquez**

not want to just make a coffee table book about Gabo’s Colombia. I wanted to make a book with me, my vision of photography. And, I wanted to tie them all together.”

### Internalising and Forgetting

Fausto has plenty of old photographs from Colombia, but he decided not to use any of them and started afresh. “The part of Colombia that was fascinating for me was the coast, the Caribbean coastline that also fascinated Gabo. So I started reading the book again—once, twice, thrice, many times. I read his autobiography, *Living to Tell the Tale*,

and his biography by Gerald Martin. I read it all, and then, I wanted to forget everything, and be myself.”

### Constructing His Own Plotline

The photobook consists of quotes paired alongside Fausto’s photographs. “I did not want to say, this is his house, this is his babysitter and so on. You don’t need to know what this piece of architecture is, or who that person is. I call *Macondo* the world of Gabo, but I made this book in a way so that it could be interesting for anyone. You can look at it as a story of Colombia and the Caribbean.” ▶

➔ **South America/ Colombia/Valledupar Cesar Department: Ash Wednesday in the cathedral. In the book, a character called Colonel Aureliano Buendía has 17 sons who are permanently marked by a mysterious Ash Wednesday cross.**



📍 **South America/ Colombia:** This is a washing plant on a banana plantation near Aracataca. A major story arc in the novel involves banana plantations, which spur a strike, which results in a massacre. This arc was probably inspired by the Ciénaga massacre of 1928.

### The Italian Neo-Realism Connect

The book's 'magical realism' is inspired by Vittorio de Sica's *Miracle in Milan*, which was an adaptation of the 1943 Italian novel, *Totò il buono*, by Cesare Zavattini, who also happened to be Gabo's lecturer at a film school. This connection was first discovered by Federica Chiochetti of Photocaptionist, and it made me marvel at the cyclical nature of things. "The link between Gabo and Italian neo-realistic directors like de Sica

and Roberto Russilini is very important. They would think about their movie in a very simple way, taking incidents as well as actors from the street, instead of professionals. Of course, it was just after WWII and it was a very poor period. But they were able to create miracles out of the everyday problems of people. Gabo's books also start with everyday life. Nothing special happens. The colonel is waiting for a letter, waiting for his pension... these things can



TIPS BY FAUSTO

- Don't be afraid to dream and follow your dreams. Something exceptional might come out of it!
- Reinvent yourself constantly. This is not my first work about Gabo. I had previously shot along the Rio Magdalena for a feature based on *The General in His Labyrinth*, but this time, I wanted to make a book.



📍 South America/ Colombia/Aracataca Department of Magdalena: This railway cuts through the village of Aracataca and has always been important. It once transported both people and bananas from the United Fruit plantations to the port of Puerto Colombia. Today, it transports coal for a multinational company to the port of Santa Marta.

📍 South America/ Colombia/Aracataca Department of Magdalena: Billiards is one of Colombia's most popular recreational pastimes. This venue was a dance hall for plantation workers. It is one of the few surviving buildings in wood with a corrugated iron roof dating back one hundred years.

happen around you in Mumbai or around me in Italy. But he's able to transfer them to a higher level, using his language."

**Selling One Photobook to Fund Another**

From 2006–09, Macondo took Fausto three years to shoot. He spent a month in a year in Colombia, but by his third trip, "I did something that I hope will make Robert Frank proud. I sold an autographed copy of *The Americans* to a collector so that I could fund my trip. It earned me USD 2000,

which was enough for travel, but not for all the film that I had to buy, of course."

We are inspired by different things in life. I have a photo titled Macondo because of Gabo, who wrote books inspired by the people he met, the movies he saw, the teachers he had. Fausto distilled a lifetime's worth of experience into a photobook about a town that is memory, metaphor and fantasy in equal parts. And so, experiences become universal, and the mundane and the everyday is where the magic comes alive. **BP**

📍 South America/ Colombia/Santa Cruz de Mompox Department of Bolivar: In the public library. Mompox features quite a few times in the geography created by Gabo for his novels, and also in *The General in His Labyrinth*.





# Sensorium 2014


An arts and literary festival in Goa, **Sensorium**, is a reflection on photography and its intersection with literature, cinema and music.

From 5 December 2014 till 25 January 2015, Sunaparanta, Goa Centre for the Arts will host the inaugural edition of Sensorium. The festival at this idyllic locale promises to be wonderfully interesting, with literary and visual arts intermingling with photography.

Sensorium 2014 is being organised by Prashant Panjiar, co-founder of Delhi Photo Festival, and author Siddharth Dhanvant Shanghvi, Honorary Director of the festival. In keeping with the theme, the exhibitions on display will include a multimedia showcase, which reconstructs the body by Gopika Chowfla. Also on display will be Sohrab Hura's notes, letter and photos

on his mother's illness that showcase the power of images and words, when used in combination.

Sooni Taraporevala, in *From Screenplay to Screen*, will take the viewer through the journey of her film *Salaam Bombay* from ideation, to words and finally visuals. Fausto Giaccone will recreate the enigmatic world of Gabriel García Márquez through his series *Macondo*.

The festival will also feature works from Dayanita Singh, photo-poetry based on the poems of Octavio Paz and Anusha Yadav's *The Indian Memory Project*. 

Visit [www.betterphotography.in](http://www.betterphotography.in) for more updates

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## Farrokh Chothia's *Jazz*

For Sensorium, Farrokh will showcase his series of jazz portraiture that is a stark, emotion-filled document of these maestros and their place in the history of music.

Speaking about the work, writer Salman Rushdie says, "With the series *Jazz*, Farrokh strives to create visual music. The images are a portfolio of the new age of jazz. They are centred not around glamour, but the hard work put in by these men and women, all masters of their craft. Don't look at these pictures in silence.

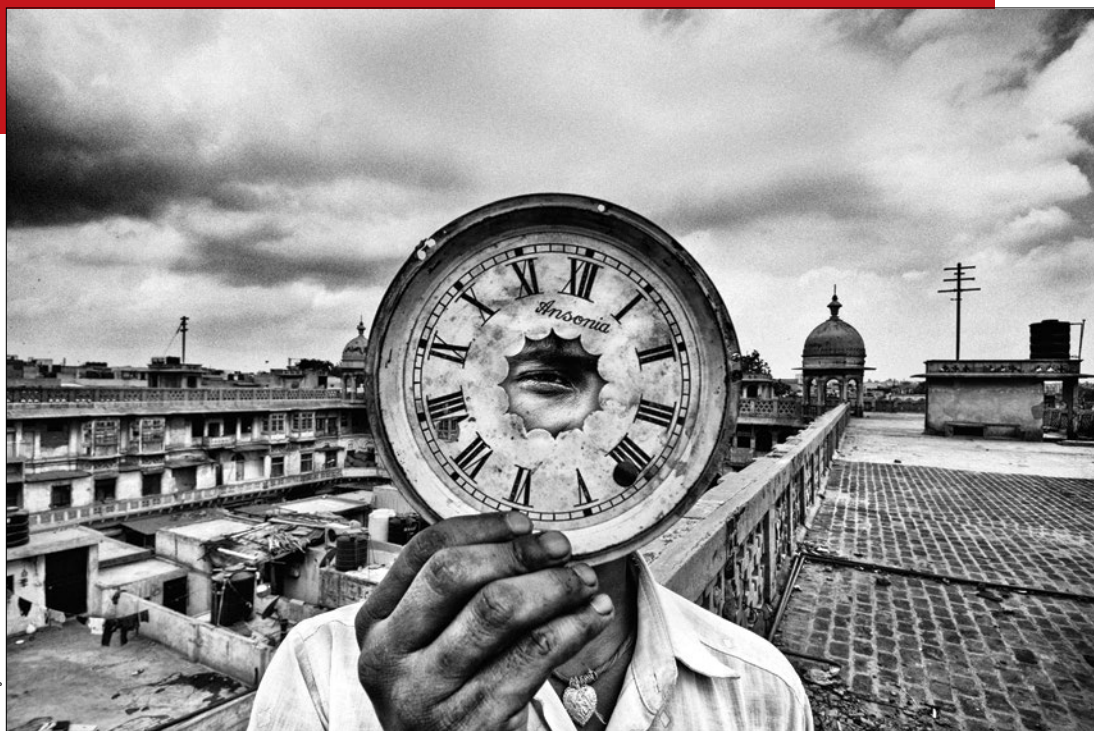
They ask for music to be played."



Photos by Farrokh Chothia

## Octavio Paz in India Curated by Jesús Clavero-Rodríguez

Photos by Subrata Biswas



The group exhibition, curated by Jesús Clavero-Rodríguez, is a series of dialogues interlinking photography and Latin American poetry. The viewer is invited to delve deep into the words of Octavio Paz through the photos of Subrata Biswas, Adil Hasan and Sudeep Sen that act as a visual translation of the poetry.

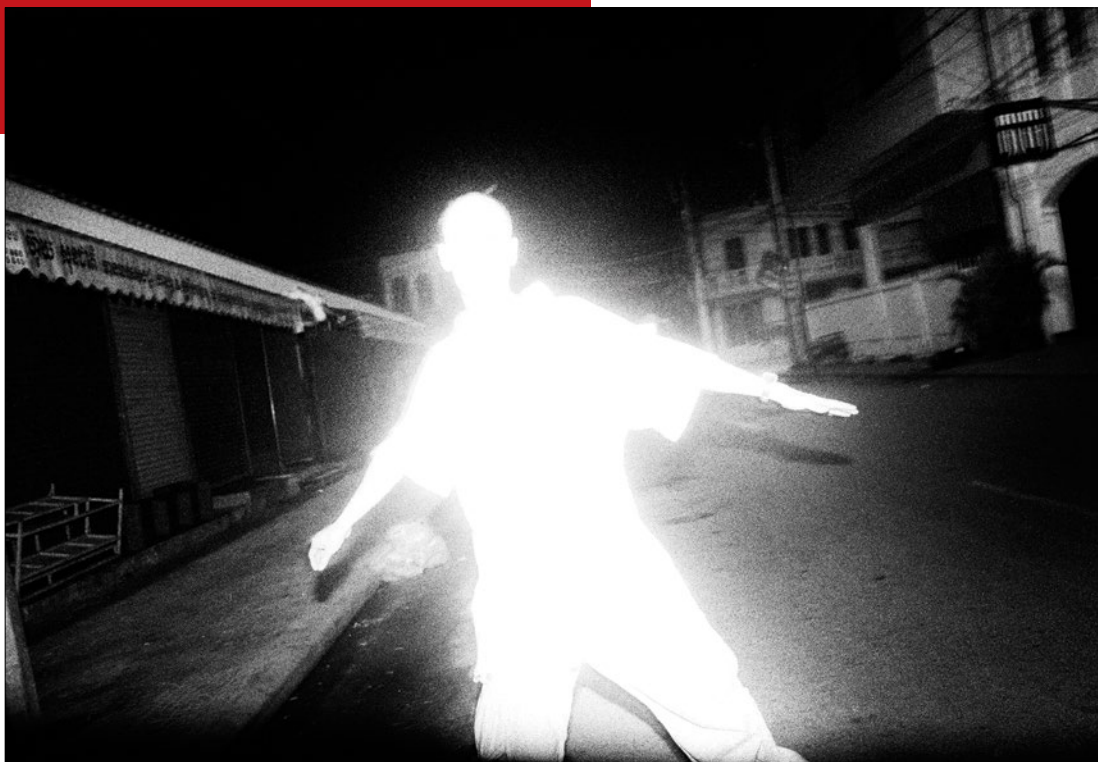
Octavio Paz was a poet-diplomat and former Ambassador of Mexico to India (1962–68) and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1990.





## Life is Elsewhere by Sohrab Hura

*Life is Elsewhere* is the first of the two books from the work *Sweet Life*. From 2006–2012, Sohrab made these photos while coming to terms with his mother's prolonged illness. She had been diagnosed with schizophrenia when he was 19 years old. Gradually, the work has shifted shape and become more of a journal. It includes letters and notes written over the years, along with the photographs to create a completely new narrative.



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Ma's nightwear. She was wearing it when she had to be forcibly admitted in the hospital.



Today Ma smokes incessantly.  
On her bad days she  
sometimes doesn't believe that.  
I'm her son



Photos by Sohrab Hura



## The Indian Memory Project by Anusha Yadav

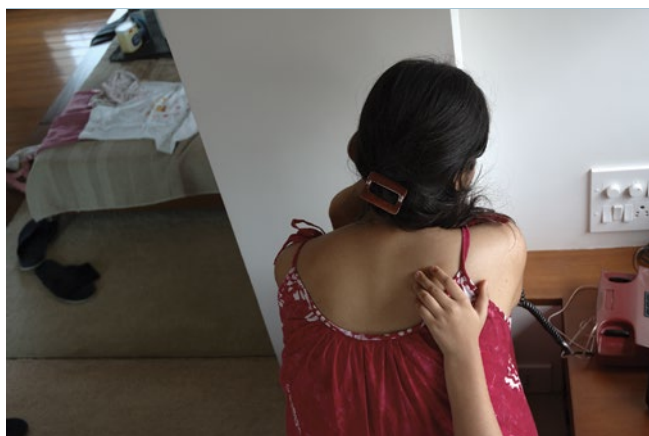


The *Indian Memory Project*, started by Anusha in 2010, is a personal, visual and oral history of the Indian subcontinent. The project shows the country as being far more diverse, curious and surprising than we think. The project comprises of personal and family archives of images and letters of tremendous historical value. They have become the missing link to the country's lost and unrecorded history.

Images Courtesy: The Indian Memory Project







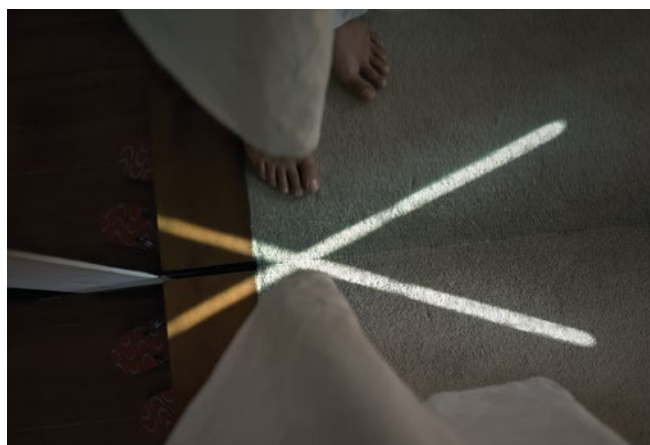
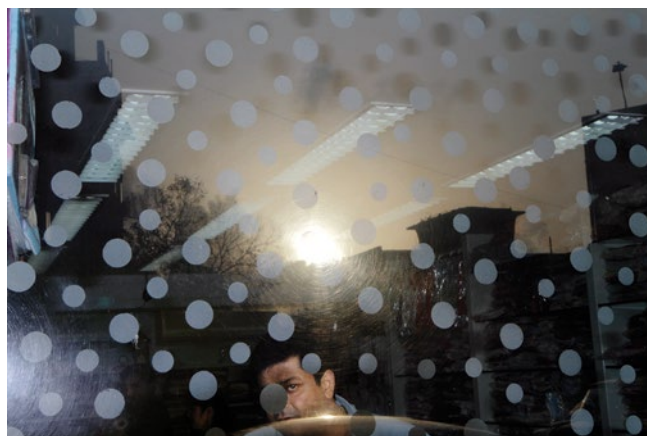
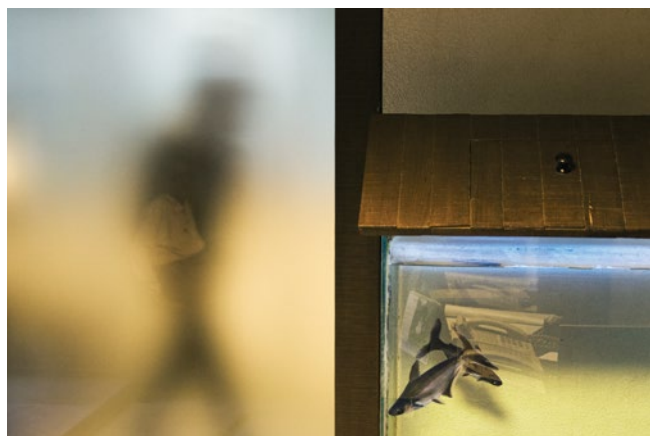
# Swapan Parekh

Raj Lalwani unravels the gamut of visual worlds inhabited by one of India's foremost and defiantly individualistic voices, **Swapan Parekh**.

**T**here is a certain dichotomy to Swapan Parekh's genius that really hits you in the gut when you study his groundbreaking advertising photography and then place it on the same viewing table as his personal work. With his advertising work, he builds

worlds that are so intricately connected that we feel as if we are witness to reality, and not just a narrative charade that he is creating. It's almost like a wizard who takes a blank frame and goes on to decide where and how he wants to cast a visual spell. As one of his advertising contemporaries had once





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**“Sometimes I feel like a picture jukebox on Shuffle mode. I don’t know what’s going to present itself next.”**

remarked, “Give this man an empty sky and nothing else. He will give you magic.”

And yet, at another level, when you observe his personal works in colour and B&W, you notice the same interweaving of elements, the same serendipity of visual associations within the frame, but this time, it’s not constructed. These are photos that are found, encountered, recognised by a way of seeing that is intensely personal and runs through all his photography. I really can’t think of any other photographer in India, whose authorship in both commercial and personal work has been so strong and

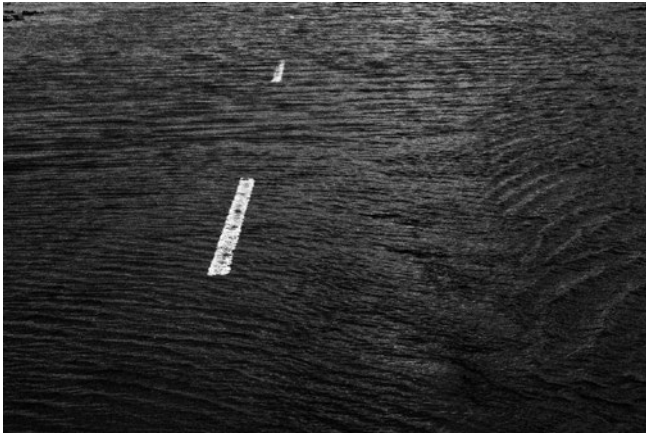
yet so fluid, constantly in flux, constantly challenging itself.

This article is a result of conversations that have taken place over the past few years, as my feelings towards his photography went from ambivalence to curiosity, respect, admiration and worship, and love.

These emotions are exactly what I sense in him when we talk about photography. Whether he is recounting an old, nostalgic story, analysing one’s vision or expressing concern at his growing disillusionment with the medium, you know that his strong thoughts are only an outcome of love. ▶

➔ *Between Me & I* is an ongoing series of musings that Swapan has with his daily existence. They may be perceived by the impatient, untrained eye as snapshots, but look closer and you will see a measured and intuitive set of sophisticated responses to the visual arrangements around him, a celebration of the mundane.





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**“It’s almost as if these days photographers don’t take photos anymore, they take projects. Invest your years in finding your voice, in developing your visual lexicon, and then, in breaking it.”**



➡ “There is something inherently seductive about black and white,” he says. “But that is where photographers ought to be careful, not to be enamoured by the sexiness, just to be part of a trend. It’s not that easy.”

### Intermingling Visual Journeys

But where did this path begin, and where is it off to? I wondered, when Swapan showed me a box of prints last year. The B&W photos in the box spanned a long time, but the one that caught my attention was shot just a few days prior. It had four sets of *chappals* in a haphazard arrangement. It seemed as if someone had walked a long way, but was wondering where to go next.

Maybe, that, in a way, symbolises his journey that has traversed so many paths—from documentary, to introducing that same aesthetic in advertising, to the concurrently running personal work. Each of these journeys has fed off the other, and who’s to say where they will go next. That’s when I smiled, as I recalled the working title of the work I was seeing. ‘In a hurry to nowhere’.

ironically, has been to almost disregard the practice of shooting a picture just for what it is. Perhaps, it is because we fear that one needs to validate and envelop one’s work to separate it from the visual cacophony that exists in the post-digital world. “We need to ask ourselves, has the number of practitioners with unique ways of seeing gone up proportionally? It’s easy to get lost. The real practitioner will have to break away onto a silent path and self evaluate.”

The answer, he says, is simpler. “Now is the time to really bring back, the vision, skill and finesse of a photo practitioner,” he says.

Maybe that is why Swapan’s bodies of work are largely about his way of seeing. That’s his lifetime project, so to say, one that is constantly shifting and realigning itself. “My practice is much about the moment ▶

### Hunting, One at a Time

I’m not sure if Swapan will agree with my reading of this image. He may not even agree with me reading *anything* into it. When we discuss photography, he isn’t very comfortable with overt intellectualisation. “Picture hai, *yaar*,” he exclaims. “It is the visuality of an image that turns me on. Any additional meaning can be perceived, but shouldn’t determine whether the photo works or not. There is a trend to package a collection of images with reams of text and call it a ‘project’, but I’m always reminded of what Eggleston had said—‘The trouble is, whatever it is about pictures, photographs... it’s just about impossible to follow up with words... they don’t have anything to do with each other... what is there to talk about?’”

Though photography has always been a single-image medium, the growing trend,



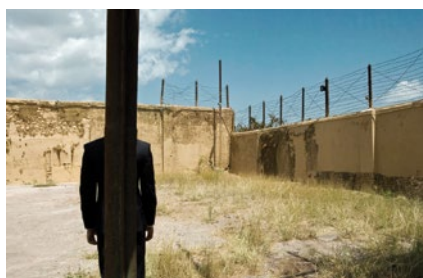
➡ His personal work in B&W has rarely been seen, and is a journey that has spanned almost from the time he started shooting. According to him, B&W is a term just of convenience because the real difficult aspect of making a print is the oft neglected grey. The real test, he says, of a true photographer, is how his or her photos look physically in the real world, as prints, or in a book.

➡ Swapan picked up the camera at 16, after the untimely demise of his father, the legendary photojournalist Kishor Parekh. “Dad died early. Raghu Rai held my hand and taught me how to walk... and eventually, Prashant (Godbole) paved the path for me.”





Ad for Jadoo.com—"Death of the Computer".



Ad for Edelweiss financial service group.



Ad for Tata Enterprises.



Ad for Reid &amp; Taylor suitings.



Ad for the iconic Ambassador car.



Ad for Jaisalmer Cigarettes lifestyle campaign.

114 **The legacy inherited from his father eventually led him to imbibe the documentary aesthetic in advertising work. He is the foremost photographer in India, and one of the very few in the world, who have bridged these disparate worlds. Seen here is an ad for 'Jadoo.com—Death of the Computer'.**

it was shot, the experience, the revelation. Being forced to elevate the work into a space so that it fits into the comfort zone of what is now the inevitable 'larger meaning' that works are compelled to be bracketed into, takes away from the very purpose of their creation." He adds, "Photography happens to me, a picture at a time."

### In Search of the Photographic Keeda

There is a certain playfulness in that sentence that belies the seriousness of his practice. It is probably this playfulness that

one sees in his ad work, which largely began when his documentary work was noticed by advertising stalwart Prashant Godbole. The photos are surrounded by a sense of the immediate, but the reality is manufactured. Every element is placed perfectly, the composition being an art directed marvel.

But there is always something more, a reflection here, a hand there... Swapan Parekh is the master of the unsteady frame. That, he admits, is the imperfection he seeks to make an image more real. That he would art direct imperfection is a mindboggling



**"This road is very long and lonely, there will be mirages on the way, but the trick is not to believe everything you see and hear, otherwise illusions will be mistaken as reality."**

Ad for *The Times of India*—"The Life & Times of India".

Ad for Satya Paul sarees.



Ad for Easies clothing.



Ad for Jaisalmer Cigarettes lifestyle campaign.



Ad for Killer jeans.



Ad for Bharat Petroleum.

paradox. "I am a little like a clown. I like to juggle balls, try and keep as many afloat at the same time," he says. I think there is a simpler Bombay word to describe it... *keeda*.

### Why Do We See The Way We See?

There is another colloquial term he keeps using, while describing the legends who've inspired him, or when praising a great image—"dadagiri"—when someone is decisively in control of their craft and vision. But lack of awareness about the *dadas* is unpardonable, he feels. "Everyone seems to be in a hurry and shooting in a bubble, oblivious to the historic path of photography. It's not about what you see,

not even about the way you see, but in fact, why you see the way you see." Vision, he says, is determined by your current state of knowledge and cumulative memories. In that sense, every picture you shoot has a strong role in determining the next one.

A photographer's lifetime of work is actually just a few minutes of the shutter being open, but it's years of experience that lead to this. Maybe, that's why, in today's frantic scenario, it is important to slow down and see, rather than just shoot and show. "This road is long and lonely, there will be mirages on the way, but the trick is not to believe everything you see and hear, or else, illusions will be mistaken as reality." **BP**

➔ With unparalleled freedom to interpret the brief, he would conceive, produce, shoot, process and print on his own terms. The final image would be used without cropping or manipulation, often with a photo credit, conditions unheard of in advertising then.

➔ The images below (left: Reddy sisters, right: Prahlad Kakkar) belong to a *TOI* campaign that had a simple brief of a newspaper being as interesting as its readers. With the diminishing importance of print advertising, it is important to note these images as a testament of a time gone by.

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# 1000 Words

A selection of some of the best images from the Indian mainstream media

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**Prashant Nadkar**  
The Indian Express

## Silhouetted Authority

PM Narendra Modi is seen addressing a rally at Tasgaon, Sangli, before the Maharashtra elections in October. What is striking about the image is that Modi's features are recognisable even though he is silhouetted, a testament to the man's popularity.



## The Celebration

BJP President Amit Shah celebrates the party's victory in New Delhi in October after the Maharashtra and Haryana election results were announced. The reverence in the faces of the party workers surrounding him and the rose petals enveloping him paint a larger than life picture of his persona.

**Oinam Anand**  
The Indian Express

## Waiting for the Return

A supporter of AIADMK General Secretary J Jayalalithaa braves the rains, waiting for her idol's convoy in Chennai. The photographer has very subtly conveyed three stories in a single frame—of a younger Jayalalithaa, a more sombre one of today and the determination writ on the face of the lady supporter.

**B A Raju**  
The Times of India



## Out of Bounds

A police officer investigates the scene of a crime, where a 27-year-old woman was murdered in her home in New Delhi. The barricade tape denying entry to a policeman may seem ironic, but it serves to maintain critical evidence at the crime scene, for forensic investigators.

**Oinam Anand,**  
The Indian Express





# PHOTO FEATURE



**Selvaprasanth Lakshmanan** is a photographer and visual journalist based in Bengaluru. His work has been featured in 'Time Out', 'Asia Geo' and 'The New York Times' amongst other publications. He received a fellowship from the National Foundation of India for his series 'Life in Troubled Waters'.

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I saw this house sink into the sea at Ennore, Tamil Nadu. Soil erosion is caused by rapid construction in these areas and many homes face the danger of being swallowed by the sea.



# Life in Troubled Waters

Selvaprakash Lakshmanan documents the complexity of India's coasts, while travelling from Chennai to Gokarna.





➤ Everything is co-related and I want to portray that in my series. Two intermingling narratives make for a stronger impact.

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➤ Dead mangrove trees stand in front of an oil refinery in Kochi. With rapid industrialisation, there are a multiplicity of reasons as to why various kinds of flora are dying out at the fringes of the coasts.

**W**hen we see India's coastline in photographs, the imagery is dominated by serene beaches and sunsets. However, the real story of the country's shoreline and the fishing communities is quite the opposite. The issues are layered and complex, often directly and indirectly affecting one another.

The fisherfolk have to deal with the steady deterioration of their habitat as erosion, indiscriminate construction and urban waste overwhelm the coasts. The fragile ecology of the region, in turn, is adversely affected.

Since 2008, I have been documenting the entire length of India's coastline. People need to see the real state of our coasts and the people who inhabit them. **BP**

— As told to **Natasha Desai**

To view more of Selvaparakash's work, visit [www.facebook.com/lifeintroubledwaters](http://www.facebook.com/lifeintroubledwaters)

#### When Tackling a Layered Social Topic

- **Adopt the Lifestyle:** To truly understand the problem, you must experience it from the eyes of the affected.
- **Don't Give Yourself a Deadline:** With such wide-ranging topics, events occur gradually and you need to devote time covering them.





🚫 Locals oppose the springing up of nuclear reactors in the coastal regions, as residents fear nuclear waste and a Fukushima-like tragedy.

Many communities have been protesting vociferously against the construction of these facilities such as the ones in Kudankulam and Idinthakarai in Tamil Nadu.



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Fishermen are often captured by Sri Lankan officials as they encroach on international waters, which is a narrow strip between the two countries. While they are not entirely blameless, they are often compelled to do so, as the fish move further away from the Indian coast.



# Your Pictures

This month we challenged our readers to capture the exhilarating action of the sport in the form of street football. Here are the best images from the contest.

## The Prize:

**Grand Prize Winner:** The winning image gets the coveted *Better Photography's* Collector's Edition 12 Pocket Guide set, which are comprehensive guides on how to make the best pictures in every genre, ranging from sports, wildlife to festivals and colours.

To see all the nominees images for this contest, visit [www.betterphotography.in](http://www.betterphotography.in)

## Winner



## ➔ Ready, Set, Goal!

Sreeman Pal, Ichapura

"In Kolkata, whenever there is a game of football, you can expect the entire locality to be present to watch the local Ronaldos, Messis and Rooneys play. Despite the limited space to view, the sheer number of attendees shows the seriousness they have for the sport."

**Camera:** Canon EOS 70D

**Lens:** Canon EF-S 10–22mm f/3.5–4.5 USM

**Aperture:** f/3.5

**Shutterspeed:** 1/50sec

**ISO:** 640





Auto cut off LCD Charger with Bad Cell detection  
Can charge 1/2/3/4 AA/AAA sizes at a time



Auto Cut off Charger for multiple charging  
Can charge 2/4/6/8 AA/AAA sizes at a time



Ready to use & Rechargeable Batteries  
Low Self Discharge Rate

**envie**  
Rechargeable Batteries & Chargers





**Suspended Midair**

Shanth Kumar S L,  
Chennai

"In anticipation of the right moment, I was patiently waiting behind the goalpost. Suddenly, the young goalkeeper leapt in the air and almost did a backflip, while successfully kicking the ball away from the net. The low angle shot gave the image a more dramatic feel."

**Camera:** Canon EOS 7D  
**Lens:** Sigma 10–20mm  
**f/3.5 EX DC HSM**  
**Aperture:** f/9  
**Shutterspeed:** 1/1600sec  
**ISO:** 250

**Honourable Mention****Honourable Mention****Victory is Mine**

Sirsendu Gayen, Sarsuna

"I was always captivated by the spirit of the people who play football. This photo opportunity arrived when I requested a young boy to pose for me. What I captured was the jubilant feeling that one experiences after scoring a goal."

**Camera:** Nikon D610  
**Lens:** Nikkor 24–85mm  
**f/3.5–4.5G ED VR**  
**Aperture:** f/5.6  
**Shutterspeed:** 1/250sec  
**ISO:** 2000



Participate in the  
'Your Pictures Contest' on  
[betterphotography.in/contests](http://betterphotography.in/contests)  
to win a chance to be  
featured in the magazine and  
win exciting prizes!

## ➔ The Perfect Frame

Sujan Sarkar, Cooch Behar

"It was the monsoon season when I made this photograph in the Chilkirhat grasslands. The moment I noticed one of the children holding the rim of a tyre, I instantly knew that it would make a perfect frame to capture the action in front of me."

Camera: Nikon 1 J1

Lens: 1 Nikkor VR  
10–30mm f/3.5–5.6

Aperture: f/5.6

Shutterspeed: 1/500sec

ISO: 100



Honourable Mention

## Honourable Mention



## Playing with the Gods

Soham Sarkar, Kumortuli

"I shot this image in a narrow lane in Kolkata. Despite cramped spaces, children always find a way to play their favourite sport. I wanted to capture this enthusiasm in the faces of the children. This, along with the mural of Shiva, completes the photograph for me."

Camera: Nikon D7000

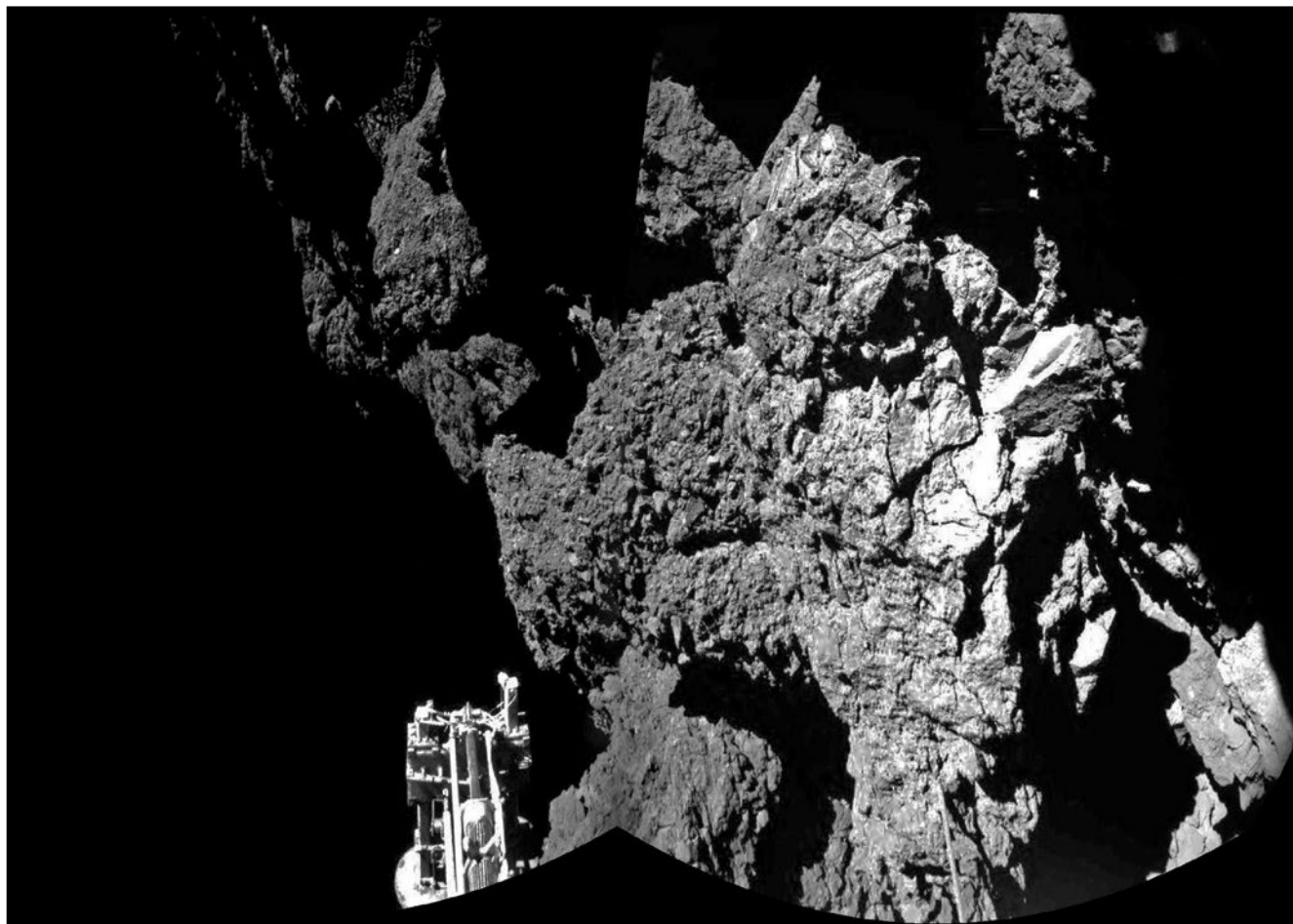
Lens: Nikkor AF-S DX  
18–55mm f/3.5–5.6G VR

Aperture: f/3.5

Shutterspeed: 1/320sec

ISO: 1600





**Image Source:**  
ESA/Rosetta/Philae/CIVA

## Another Milestone for Humanity

**J**ust when we think we explored every arena we possibly could, an event occurs which completely turns everything around. This is what happened when the European Space Agency managed to land a probe on a comet on 12 November 2014, for the first time in history. In March 2004, the European Space Agency launched Rosetta, a space probe, to study the comet 67P/Churyumov–Gerasimenko. Philae, an orbiter and lander module accompanied Rosetta, until its designated landing on the comet. Philae and Rosetta have been following preplanned orbits around the sun for more than 10 years, in an epic, ongoing journey, with the intent of making the final rendezvous with 67P.

On 12 November 2014, Rosetta got in position and deployed Philae, and the probe made its way to the comet. Seven hours later, Philae landed on 67P, and history was made. While Philae was unable to deploy its harpoons, it managed to stay on.

Philae then beamed the first image from 67P to the European Space Agency, shot with the lander's CIVA (Comet Infrared and Visible Analyser) camera. The image itself is a mosaic of two images, which show the comet's surface, in all its cracked and monochromatic glory.

Philae's journey has only just begun. Over the coming months, its mission is to analyse the surface of the comet intermittently. In the course of time, it will help humanity uncover secrets to questions we have often wondered about and provide concrete proof and evidence to researchers in their study of how the world came to be. ■